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A NEOPLATONIC INTERPRETATION OF THE CHIGI MADONNA · BY CHANDLER R. POST

THE modern study of *Kulturgeschichte* has definitely established that artists and men of letters are much more largely products of their times than had hitherto been suspected. Qualities that used to be traced to sheer innate proclivities are constantly demonstrated to be dependent upon contemporary intellectual tendencies. A familiarity with the history of civilization becomes as necessary an instrument in the hands of the critic as a knowledge of the principles of color and composition. It was but a few months ago that Italo Maione proved that Taddeo Gaddi's modifications of Giotto's compositions are due not so much to pictorial inferiority as to an attempt to reproduce the teachings of the popular Florentine confessor of his day, Fra Simone Fidati.¹ Taddeo Gaddi, to be sure, is a third rate painter and so lacking in a strong personality of his own that he would be particularly susceptible to every wind that blew, but even a master like Botticelli, so individualistic as to be almost an eccentric, is at least half the creature of his environment. The most obvious instance is his indebtedness to Savonarola and to the Piagnoni for many ideas in the works of his last period, but I have chosen for examination here a somewhat less well known sphere of his interests, the revived cult of Neoplatonism at the courts of Cosimo de' Medici and of Lorenzo the Magnificent. From his many paintings that bespeak this curious form of Renaissance philosophy, America possesses a signal example in the Chigi Madonna, the masterpiece, perhaps, among Mrs. John L. Gardner's collection of masterpieces at Fenway Court, Boston.

The direct meaning of the picture requires no special elucidation. It might very well be styled the Madonna of the Eucharist, for the Holy Child blesses the symbols of the Sacrament, the wheat and the grapes, offered by an angel, and the Virgin extracts an ear

¹ *L'arte*, March, 1914, pp. 107-119.

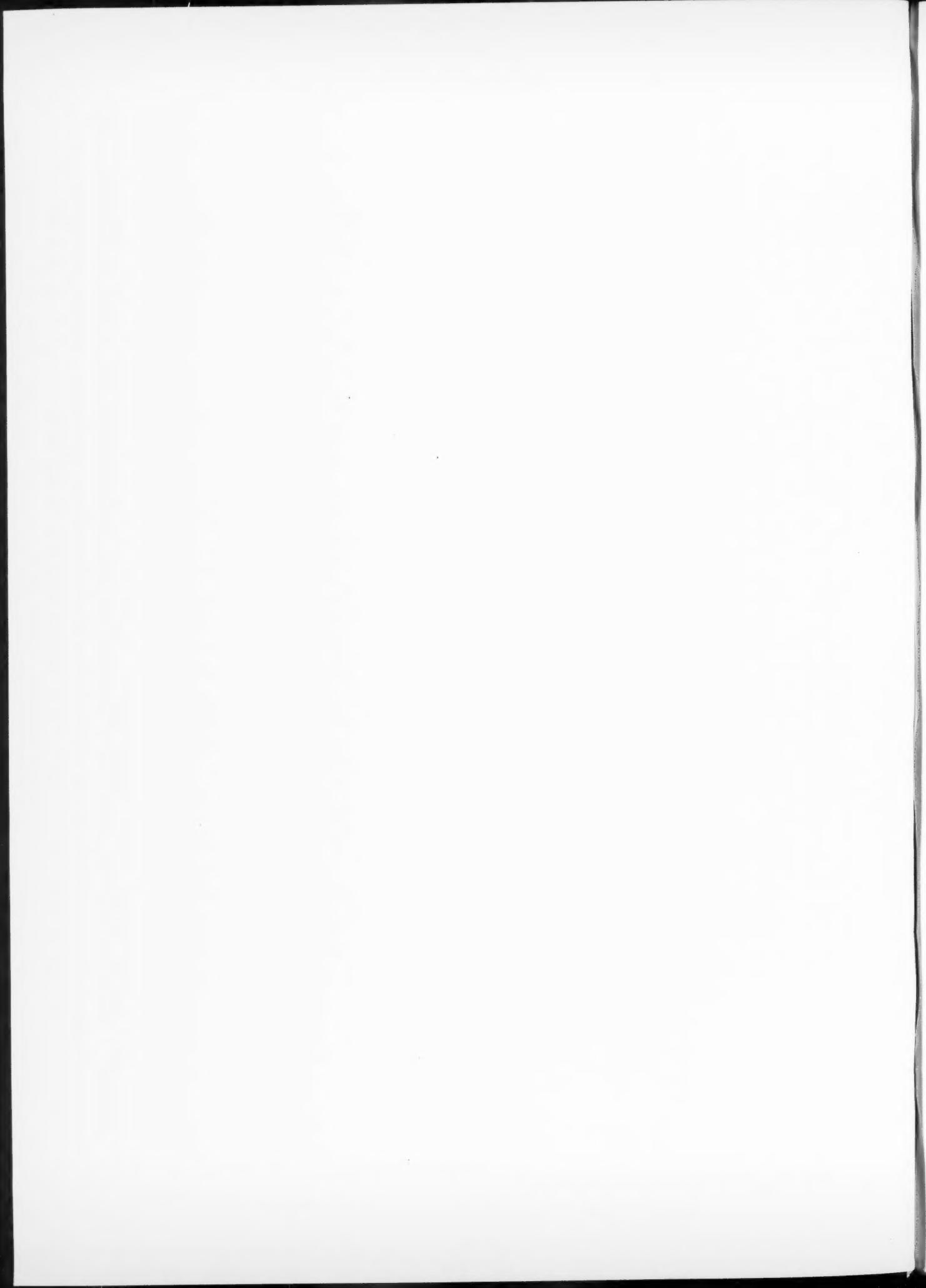
of grain, thus typifying her gracious acceptance, as mediator, of the prayers of the faithful in union with the sacrifice of the altar.¹ But so far we account only for the outward and visible signs, and there remains the inward and spiritual grace. Why this supernatural lightness of body? What are the thoughts that underly the looks and attitudes of the sacred personages? How may we describe the exquisitely intangible expressions that hover lightly upon the countenances? The stock terms are "rapture" and "mysticism," but since they apply as well to the utterly diverse character of the creations of Fra Angelico or Perugino or of half a hundred other religious artists, there is need of further definition. The key, it seems to me, is given by Neoplatonism.

The literary ramifications of this phenomenon have been partially analyzed, inspiring, as it does, for instance, the greater part of Michelangelo's subtle but lofty poetry; but its artistic bearing has been scarcely adumbrated. The history of its development in the fifteenth century calls only for brief recapitulation. The Florentine *savants* conceived themselves as Platonists, and the translation of the Greek philosopher had begun early in the Quattrocento with Leonardo Aretino; but what in reality they studied and promulgated was Neoplatonism, viewing Plato through the spectacles of Plotinus and his school of the third century A. D. Thrilled with the enthusiasm imported into the peninsula by the Greek humanists, the fantastic Gemistos Plethon and his pupil, Cardinal Bessarion, Cosimo de' Medici founded an academy intended to reproduce the Athenian prototype, and over it he placed Marsilio Ficino, who stamped upon the tenets the form that they assumed in the Renaissance. Within the highly rarefied group of *littérateurs* Neoplatonism became a perfect passion. The basic concept was that Unity or God could not be comprehended by mortals but only apprehended through spiritual intuition or ecstasy. Of the different grades of existence that the system distinguished, matter was the lowest, or else was denied any real being whatsoever. The duty of the human being, a combination of soul and matter and therefore standing at the center of the universe half-way between the higher and inferior orders of existence, was, by lofty aspiration and good works, to overcome his baser nature, the material, and so to purify and release his spiritual self, a reflection of God, contaminated and distorted through connection

¹ Cf. A. Venturi, *Storia dell' arte italiana*, VII, 1, p. 601.



BOTTICELLI: THE CHIGI MADONNA.
Collection of Mrs. John L. Gardner, Boston.



with the body. The ultimate desire was an ever closer approximation to the supreme degree of being or Deity, and the consequence was that a premium was set upon rapt contemplation or mysticism. True love had an important place in the scheme, as one of the means of approach to God, which may be most easily understood by a summary of Girolamo Benivieni's poem, embodying Ficino's doctrines: man is first moved by admiration for woman's material beauty; then he is inspired to love its source, the beauty of her soul; hence he is carried still higher to the heavenly beauty, an attribute of divinity, of which hers is but the image; finally from this Idea of perfect beauty, as Plato would have said, to God himself, who is the source of all loveliness.

The effect upon synchronous art was immediate. Sculptors and painters alike sought to impress upon their figures the aspects of that ecstatic and mystic speculation which to them was the *summum bonum*. The devotion to the Virgin and the poetic theories of the *dolce stil nuovo* had tended to produce in the art of the Middle Ages an idealized type of womanhood; the even more spiritual love advocated by Neoplatonism evoked in the art of the Renaissance a yet more ethereal feminine type. The teaching of the Academy found its greatest artistic exponent in Botticelli. He was bound to the circle by many ties. He was the darling of the Medici, who were also the patrons of the Neoplatonists. Preëminently an intellectual painter, he was fitted by nature to sympathize with the resuscitated philosophy of Plato and Plotinus. His interest in contemporary literature is evident at every turn. Both the Spring and the birth of Venus are derived from the *Stanze* of Politian, and he may have known the Greek epigrams from which the poet culls his conception of Aphrodite Anadyomene.¹ Through Politian, he probably enjoyed the friendship of the choicest spirit of the Academy, the charming and peerless young Pico della Mirandola. He was certainly intimate with one of its chief luminaries, Cristoforo Landini, for whose edition of the *Divine Comedy* he made a series of drawings for engravings only five years after he painted the picture at Fenway Court.

An early work, executed presumably about 1475,² it already exhibits unmistakable evidence of the Neoplatonic leanings that may

¹ H. P. Horne, *Sandro Botticelli*, London, 1908, pp. 54 ff. and 150 ff.

² The date is not stated but implied in the discussions of both Horne and Venturi.

be discerned in virtually all of Botticelli's production. The Academy had long been absorbing the attention of cultured Florentines; although Marsilio Ficino had not quite completed the great manifesto of the group, the *Theologia platonica*, he was already far advanced in his translations from Plato; Cristoforo Landini had published or was publishing the Neoplatonic *Disputationes camaldulenses*. Botticelli must have spent many exquisite hours in discussing the popular new philosophy with his erudite friends. Who knows but that he himself belonged to the Academy or at least was bidden sometimes to its "disputations" or its symposiums? The lady whom he has chosen to represent in the Virgin is such as a Neoplatonist could love without scruple. She is the most ethereal in his long line of unearthly women. Fair she is but with a fairness not of this world. Beauty of body she has, but transfigured by the beauty of soul which is a reflection of divine loveliness and which God has bestowed upon her that she may attract mankind to Him. So delicate her features, so diaphanous her flesh, so gentle her hand upon the Babe, so light her touch upon the grain, that she seems the evanescent spirit of some vision. Nay, she herself has pondered over Plato and Plotinus, she has walked at the side of Ficino at the Villa Careggi, until their doctrines have become her very life blood. Her countenance is the crystallization of an almost painfully intense yearning towards God; her soul is rapt in thoughts of Him, until with her the spiritual things are the only reality. Temporal joys she finds futile and fleeting, sadly she views the passing show, but the melancholy is gentle rather than bitter. It is not the unsophisticated mysticism of Fra Angelico's soaring Virgin in another priceless possession of the same collection. The Friar's figure has the simple and unreflecting piety of a peasant girl; the longing of Botticelli's Madonna is compounded of the convictions that emanate from profound study of theological problems and from intricate speculation. Upon the angel's face, too, there rests a meditative intellectualism, and the sober infant who represents the Holy Child will grow into an Academician.

It is, then, Neoplatonism, both in its more abstract aspiration towards God and in its theory of love, that defines the apparently intangible character and expression of Botticelli's figures. It differentiates him not only from Fra Angelico but also from his first teacher, Filippo, and his disciple, Filippino Lippi. As far as any

artistic or literary phenomenon may be said to begin, sentiment had entered Florentine art with the scapegrace monk. But his women shine usually with no more than earthly beauty, and as most notably in the Pitti *tondo*, their sentiment is but the wistfulness of human affection. When in the Nativities of the Florentine Academy and of Berlin he does achieve a certain spirituality, it is lacking in mental force. However adversely Filippino Lippi is regarded by modern criticism on the grounds of inharmonious color, factitious elegance, and a premature velleity for the *baroque*, he is still entitled to a place in the courts of the mighty if for no other reason than because he has impressed upon a long series of pictures, including such famous examples as the Badia altar-piece and the Prato shrine, an ethereal quality at least equal to that of his master; but he did not inherit from his father sufficient intellectuality with which to give stamina to the ecstasies of his saints. Botticelli's alertness to the movements of his time and sympathetic comprehension of the Academy's principles obviated sugary vagueness and gave precise meaning to the mysticism of the Chigi and many another Madonna.

PICTURES IN AMERICA BY BERNARDO DADDI, TADDEO GADDI, ANDREA ORCAGNA AND HIS BROTHERS : I · BY OSWALD SIRÉN

ALTHOUGH Giotto's individual contribution to the development of Florentine Art was deeper and more far-reaching than that of any other master for centuries, influences from other quarters began to be felt soon after his death, even in his native city. They came mostly from Siena, where Ambrogio Lorenzetti's powerful creative personality had imparted a new imaginative and pictorial note to the art of painting, and their effect was most keenly felt by those artists who were most exclusively painters.

The most gifted among these was Bernardo Daddi. About the middle of the XIVth century he occupied an intermediate position between the Florentine and Sienese Schools; his subtle sense of decorative beauty, line and color made him almost more closely related with the Sienese painters than with Giotto's immediate pupils in his native city. A fine specimen of his delicate drawing and sweet lyrical mode of expression is the little diptych in the New York Historical Society Museum (Nos. 181 and 182—Fig. 1), rep-

resenting a full-length Madonna and the Last Judgment. The Virgin especially, in her bluish-green mantle, and surrounded by angels in red and green garments, gives us, through the sonorous color-harmony as well as through the soft rhythm of the flowing outlines, a fair conception of the artist's emotional temperament.

Among several other works by the same master in American collections should be mentioned a little Madonna, attended by four saints, in the collection of Mr. J. G. Johnson, and a fragment of a larger Madonna belonging to Mr. McIlhenny, also of Philadelphia. Although this last picture is cut on both sides and at the bottom, it preserves a characteristic beauty of design. The inclination of the Virgin's head in connection with the flowing lines of the sweeping mantle strikes a note of dreamy melancholy. The boy—rather a symbol than a real child—is drawn in harmony with the general rhythm of the decorative design. The whole composition is strongly influenced by Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Madonnas, but the type of the Virgin and her hand testify to Daddi being the master.

Besides Madonnas, the artist's usual subject is the Crucifixion. He painted a great number of small domestic altars with this motive, generally introducing but three or four figures at the foot of the cross, and only occasionally a few more. There are good examples of these small Crucifixions in the collections of Mr. D. F. Platt in Englewood, N. J., and Mr. George Blumenthal in New York. In the latter collection is also to be found a little representation of S. Agata's martyrdom which shows close affinity in style with Bernardo's above-mentioned works in New York and Philadelphia. It is very delicate in color, light red, yellow, blue, green and gray being the leading tones, and its effect of preciousness is further enhanced by the minute ornamentation of the golden ground.

I have mentioned these works because they constitute an instructive contrast to the Florentine Trecento pictures, which are to receive most of our attention here. Daddi is the first and the most distinguished representative of what we may call the Sienese pictorial style in Florentine Trecento Art. Undoubtedly the most prominent representatives of the other tendency, which follows more closely in the footsteps of Giotto and is characterized by a more plastic treatment of the figures, are the Cione brothers, particularly Andrea, (who was also a sculptor and architect,) and Giotto's direct pupils, Taddeo Gaddi and Stefano. But there is this essential

Fig. 1. BERNARDO DADDI: MADONNA AND CHILD.
Historical Society, New York.

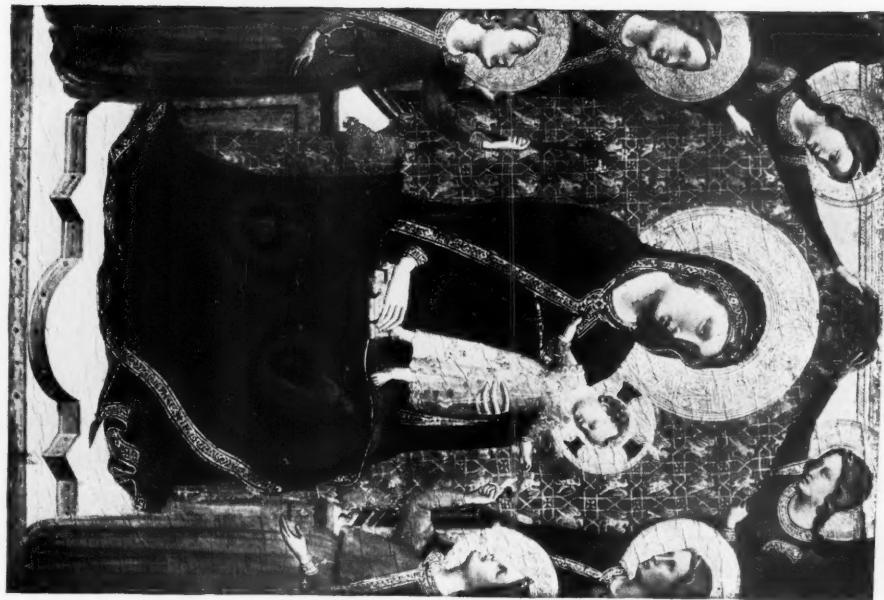


Fig. 2. TADDEO GADDI: MADONNA ENTHRONED.
Historical Society, New York.



difference between the Cione brothers and Taddeo and Stefano, that while the latter were exploiting forms handed down by their great teacher and imitating the most striking qualities of his style, Nardo and Andrea di Cione were striving for a more original observation of nature and specially accentuated the plastic values of objects. Taddeo never acquired any conception of the real appearance of the organic figure, or of the folds of a mantle; he drew his figures simply by applying the mannerisms of Giotto's style; and yet this simple, most servile form of artistic imitation made him one of the most esteemed artists in the eyes of his contemporaries.

Taddeo never succeeded in understanding the essentials of Giotto's concentrated dramatic composition. His talent was in a different field and he produces his weakest effects when attempting to excel his master in his own field of expression, by loading his frescoes with more and more and heavier figures. Whenever Taddeo attempts performances in Giotto's manner, his success is always prevented by absence of truth and dignity in the forms, poor rendering of space, and inability to hold together a large number of figures in a monumental composition. He did not possess the gift of concise, dramatic presentation, but had the faculty of unrolling the progress of a story after the manner of the chronicler. A good example of his talent in this direction is afforded in the legend of Job, of the Campo Santo at Pisa, which is usually, and wrongly, attributed to Francesco da Volterra.

It is probable that even at an early age he had some part in executing his teacher's large decorative compositions, and thus his technique and manner were adapted to the demands of great wall-spaces. His easel-pictures do not show him at his best; he has not Bernardo Daddi's skill in fitting his style to the smaller scale. He has but little feeling for the rhythmic values of linear composition. Yet he did turn out a number of small altar-pieces, usually including a Madonna surrounded by saints, and on the wings, scenes from the life of Christ, the best-known example of which belongs to the Berlin Museum. Another, whose wings are lacking, is in the Museum of the New York Historical Society (Fig. 2). Here the Madonna is represented as enthroned on a Gothic throne of marble and flanked by five saints on each side. The picture is one of Taddeo's earlier and more pleasing works; the figures are comparatively well-proportioned, not so heavy and swollen as in his later pictures. The color

harmony of dark green, red, blue, and yellowish brown is subdued. A sense of space has been given by the placing of the Madonna somewhat towards the background. The picture is much more successful in decorative effect than, for example, the large altar-piece in the Metropolitan Museum, one of the artist's later works, in which little is left of the plastic quality he had acquired under Giotto's guidance; the figures are heavy, inflated, entirely lacking tectonic structure. Before his death (1366), Taddeo must have had ample opportunity to realize that the times had advanced without him, and that different ideals from those set up by his master were being pursued in Florence.

Andrea di Cione, called Orcagna, is an artist of entirely different character, whose contribution to Florentine Trecento art is a positive one. His artistic expression is far more an individual creation than that of Taddeo; he is the only Florentine who appears to have been endowed by nature with the ability to extend the fundamental notions of Giotto's style. When he died, a few years after Taddeo, he left a number of unfinished works, which at least one talented artist, his brother Jacopo, attempted to complete.

It is not necessary for us to dwell at length on Andrea Orcagna's versatile artistic output, or on the facts of his life; earlier writers have sufficiently treated them. Lorenzo Ghiberti already praises Orcagna, calling him one of the leading masters of Florence in the middle of the fourteenth century, and later writers have added to this praise. Crowe and Cavalcaselle call him a "universal genius," adding: "Had he lived at the time when perspective became a science, he might have been numbered amongst the greatest artists of his country." To which one may reply that artistic greatness hardly depends on a knowledge of the laws of perspective.¹

Andrea's most significant work as a painter is the large altar picture in the Capella Strozzi in Sta. Maria Novella, Christ enthroned with saints, which is signed: *Anno Dni MCCCLVII An-*

¹ All the biographical data needed can be found in Crowe and Cavalcaselle and in Dr. W. Suida's *Florentinische Maler um die Mitte des XIV Jahrhunderts*. Andrea was probably born about the year 1300; in 1344 he was enrolled as a painter in the Guild of the Medici and Speziali, in 1352 his name was found in the roll of the Guild of Stonemasons, in 1355 he was Capomaestro di Or San Michele, and in the following year handed in a design for the façade of the Florence Cathedral. In the years 1358, 1359, and 1360 he visited Orvieto several times, but seems hardly to have been able to comply with the terms of his contract as master of the construction of the great cathedral in that city, being too much taken up with his other obligations in Florence. It is probable that Andrea Orcagna died in 1368, that being the date which is written after his name on the rolls of the Guild of Saint Luke at Florence.

Andreas Cionis de Florentinua Me Pinxit. Unlike most of the altarpieces of that time, it is not divided into a central picture and wings; Christ, the chief figure in the center panel, is not isolated, but is connected by symmetrical lines with the personages in the wings, thus forming an equilateral triangle which is furthermore defined and emphasized by four standing figures, two at each end.

The figures are characterized by unusual power and firmness of treatment, the bodies are of stocky build, with large heads, long, well-developed hands and feet; and their movements are distinct and appropriate. The attitudes show an effort to contrast full-face and profile, the two female figures being the only slight deviations, from this basic idea. Owing to this fundamental simplicity of arrangement, as well as to the firm construction, the picture achieves an effect of severe restraint and solemnity. Before rebuking the painter for his stiffness, we must remember how closely allied this quality necessarily is with the monumental design of the work. Besides, there is in this picture a brilliancy of color that resists any thought of stiffness or emptiness. Azure, carmine, orange yellow, reddish violet, pale blue, grey, black, as well as precious gold brocade, mingle to form a sonorous symphony of color. All the materials are executed with extreme care, and rendered with the rich and mellow glow of medieval stuffs; particularly impressive is the treatment of the brocade mantle of St. Catherine, with its leaf and bird patterns.

But there is something about these garments that deserves our attention even more than their beauty of color, and that is the execution of their folds. Let us look at the ample draperies of Peter and Paul, and follow their big and little folds, ramifications and unions, and realize that we have here a true and plastic rendering of nature. Here we are forced to the conclusion that our master's ability in this most difficult art of designing drapery was among the highest the history of art has known. No other painter of the Trecento ever attempted so thorough a study of drapery as Orcagna; even Giotto, in spite of his keen observation of nature and of his plastic sense, does not advance beyond mere general suggestions, and the later Trecentisti usually lay more stress on fluency of line, on harmonious euphony of folds, than on the sharply outlined details. Andrea's efforts in this direction find no parallel until we reach

the great sculptor-painters of the fifteenth century. He was their true predecessor.

The human types are rather uniform, attenuated faces, eyes far apart, straight noses, small mouths and rounded cheeks. Peter and Thomas Aquinas are the only ones presenting somewhat different features; the former has a very energetic, forceful face, with a sharp nose and sunken eyes; the latter is one of those pale but corpulent Dominicans with great aquiline noses and voluptuous lips, perhaps a portrait of one of Andrea's contemporaries.

We have considered it necessary to analyze Orcagna's large altar-piece, as it gives a clearer and fuller idea of his individual style than do his other works. These cannot all be described here; we merely point out the most prominent ones, such as the large Madonna at Budapest, and the three figures—John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, and James—in the London National Gallery; the altar-piece in the Cappella Bonsi in the Badia, Florence (partly school-work), and the two powerful saints—Peter and John the Baptist—in the Jarves Collection in New Haven (Figs. 3 and 4). All these paintings are rather large and bear witness to Orcagna's mastery of monumental synthesis and architectonic composition. These large figures occasionally remind one of the early Japanese paintings, whose imposing forms are, to a certain extent, free translations into line and color of plastic works.

Orcagna also produced a number of smaller paintings, which combine powerful plastic qualities with a rather pictorial composition, such as the predella of the large altar-piece in the Cappella Strozzi, presenting scenes from the lives of St. Laurens, St. Peter and Thomas Aquinas, and a little picture in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, probably a portion of a predella, depicting a scene from the legend of Saint Dominic. Closely related to this last picture is a portion of a predella in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, distinguished by its richer and deeper colors. The subject is the birth of Mary: Saint Anna lies at full length on the bed, in an open hall in front of her the newborn babe is being bathed, and two female visitors, calling in order to present their good wishes, are being received by a woman servant. The picture produces the effect of a relief composed in two planes; the figures are of high stature and their movements are characterized by dignity bordering on stiffness.



FIG. 3. ANDREA ORCAGNA: SAINT
PETER.
Jarves Collection, Yale University.

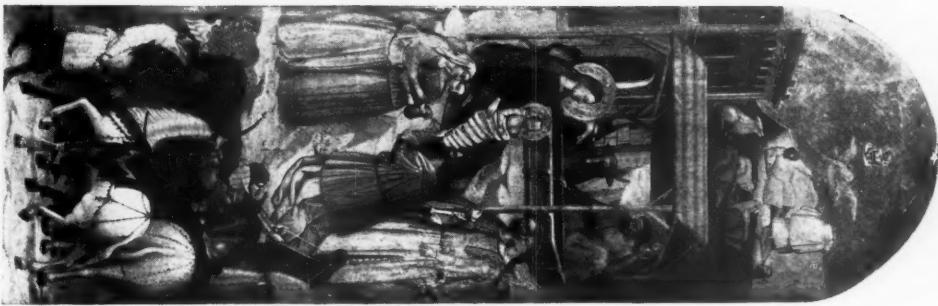
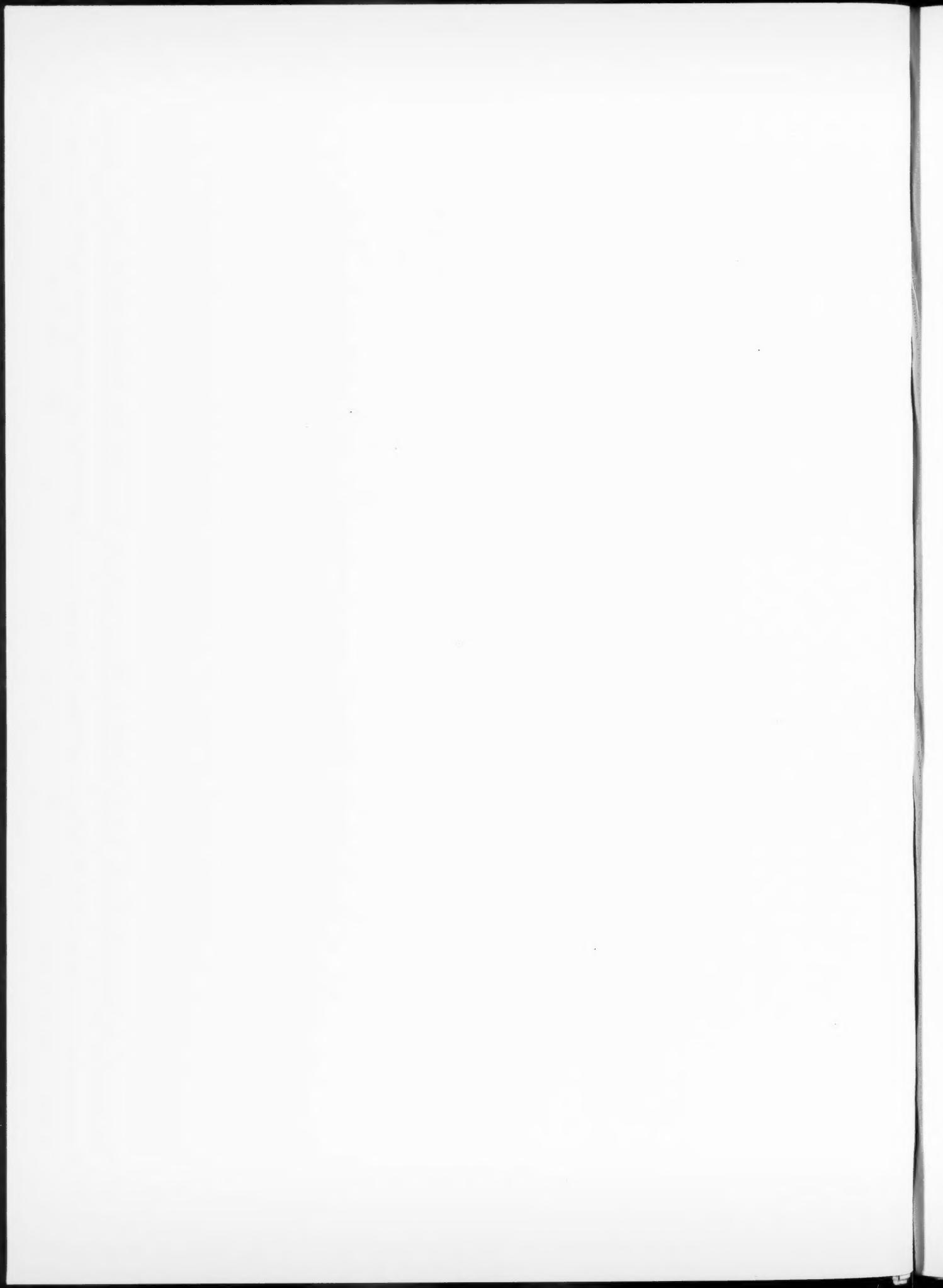


FIG. 5. ANDREA ORCAGNA:
ADORATION OF THE MAGI.
Jarves Collection, Yale University.



FIG. 4. ANDREA ORCAGNA: SAINT
JOHN THE BAPTIST.
Jarves Collection, Yale University.



The plastic treatment of the folds, and the bright red, yellowish-green, and blue tones deserve special attention.

None of these little panels can however compare, in artistic interest or in decorative effect, with the striking picture in the Jarves collection, No. 15, ascribed to Simone Martini in the old catalogue, which says: "The picture contains in itself all the beauty of pale and shadowless color and graceful composition which was the strength of the Sienese School, and shows much of the freedom of drawing which Duccio and Simone introduced" (Fig. 5). This statement, as far as it goes, is not out of place, but it does not justify one in ascribing the picture to a Sienese artist. The picture is as different as it can be from the Sienese compositions; its beauty is not to be found in a decorative rhythm of line against a flat background; it is not a silhouette composition devoid of space and depth, but it is built up like a relief with an accentuation of the different planes although carried out in colors. It presents the Adoration of the Magi, but in a very original fashion. Usually this subject was given in a long panel with the Madonna at one end and the Three Kings, with their retainers and soldiers, approaching from the other end. Here, however, the story is developed vertically and not horizontally, the main scene takes place half way up, with the Madonna holding her child on her knee, seated under a shed, and the Three Kings standing or kneeling before her; while below her, in the foreground, are gathered the horses and soldiers, and a little above her is the manger with Joseph watching his ox and ass; still further up and a little more distant is the hill on which the shepherds are receiving the glad tidings. All these scenes are taking place at the various heights of a cliff, which is formed as in steps. It is exactly the same mode of composition that we find in contemporary terra cotta and marble reliefs, and is a direct translation into painting of the methods of relief sculpture. This alone would be strong evidence of the fact that the painter must also have been a sculptor.

Proceeding to a closer study of the individual figures, our attention is attracted by the strikingly plastic treatment of the folds of the drapery, especially in the figures of Mary and the kneeling king. We have here, on a small scale, the same sharply broken folds of Orcagna's large altar-piece. The unusual shape of the picture has perhaps been the cause of a more decided attenuation of the figures than is common in Orcagna, but anyone familiar with the

master's types can easily identify them. Particularly in evidence are the long, straight nose and the almond eyes enclosed in swollen sockets. The kneeling king is a close relative of Saint Peter in the Strozzi altar-piece; while Mary is a sister to the Virgin in the same picture. But the most interesting figures are the two women—Salome and her friend—who, in their curiosity, are examining the King's myrrh-box; these figures, as well as the soldiers, who are holding the horses and camels, show a faculty of observing nature of which there is but slight indication in Orcagna's other works. The colors are unusually animated. Red, pink, blue, violet, green, yellow and gray tones fuse in rich harmony. The execution is as accurate as in a miniature. Probably the picture should be dated rather early, at any rate not later than the Strozzi altar-piece.

It is almost as hard to trace in Orcagna's works, as in those of the other Trecento painters, a real evolution of a gradually increasing enhancement of the artistic qualities. Their highest achievements as artists are usually to be found in the early stages of their careers, when they were still under the strong influence of the great master of the beginning of the century. As they freed themselves from this influence, they usually gained in variety of naturalistic expression, while weakening in monumental power and gravity. In the later work of Orcagna there is the additional defect of the artist having made use more and more of the assistance of his younger brother, Jacopo di Cione. The paintings which came from Orcagna's studio during this final period are, no doubt, many of them, the work of both brothers, and it is sometimes difficult to determine what share of each work should be attributed to either. As long, however, as Orcagna was still working, a rather high quality was maintained in these studio pictures; after his death the decline is rapid.

It is well, after having spoken of Orcagna's independent work, to mention a few of these studio pictures, in which he may have had some share, before we pass on to the more distinctly individual creations of the younger brothers. I would mention, among the best, a little panel in the Fogg Museum at Cambridge, now labelled with Agnolo Gaddi's name, although formerly attributed to Giotto, which came from the collections Du Cluzel and Dollfus.¹ The picture is unusual in many respects, not the least in the method of putting to-

¹ Full-page reproduction in the sale catalogue of the sale of the Dollfus collection, Old Masters, No. 63.

gether four different scenes from the lives of Mary and Christ: in the center is the Annunciation and the Nativity, each under a pointed arch; above these, in a medallion, is the Crucifixion, and below, in a larger horizontal composition, the Entombment of Christ. The various parts have no compositional connection; especially the Entombment is an almost independent picture, which certainly would be of stronger effect if it were not for the distracting influence of the other scenes. A certain likeness between this Entombment and Orcagna's representation of the Death of Mary on the large marble tabernacle in Or San Michele is evident—the composition here is decidedly like a relief in three planes—but the single figures lack something of that plastic firmness and massivity which we have pointed out in Orcagna's own creations. The types are, however, Orcagnesque, and certain figures, for instance the kneeling Madonna in front of the sarcophagus, are worthy of the master.

The Annunciation and Nativity are given in the traditional manner, each with but two figures in profile. We observe especially the clear plastic draping of the kneeling angel's mantle and the big, stiff baby on Mary's knee, a doll of the same kind as in the above-described representation of the Adoration of the Magi. The mother also recalls the Virgin of the latter picture, although she is distinctly weaker, lacking something of the tectonic structure which we have observed in the other figure. The picture as a whole, however, is of good decorative effect, owing in no small measure to the vivid color scheme, with ultramarine, amethyst, carmine, cinnabar, blue and orange-yellow. These are the typical Orcagna colors.

Another small picture, which may be connected even more closely with Orcagna himself, is the small Madonna triptych in the collection of the New York Historical Society (No. 186). Although of very small dimensions, this Madonna shows the same powerful modelling, the same type and hands as the large characteristic Madonna in Budapest. These stately and stiff saints show the Orcagnesque treatment of the folds and his elongated types, although the small size prevents the plastic qualities from standing out very prominently. On the left wing are represented the Nativity and Saint Christopher; on the right, Christ on the Cross, with Mary and Saint John at the foot. In the gables are the Annunciation and God the Father. Even in these simple compositions the straight relief contour and the sculpturesque draping are the most pronounced characteristics. The color has the same sonorous beauty as in the previous pictures.

A STATUE OF THE SCHOOL OF CHAMPAGNE IN PRINCETON UNIVERSITY · BY PAUL VITRY

THIS little figure, which was discovered in France five or six years ago by Professor Allan Marquand, has no history. It is one of those fragments, neglected by those who should feel for them at least the traditional veneration of the race, which have been hidden away in garrets and store rooms until some art lover or dealer realized their value.

But its provenance can easily be determined by comparison. It undoubtedly belongs to the group of sculptures which have been studied so thoroughly and exhaustively by MM. Raymond Koechlin and Jean Marquet de Vasselot in their work on the sixteenth century's sculptures of Troyes and Southern Champagne. It is among the oldest of this large and varied group and dates from 1515 to 1525.

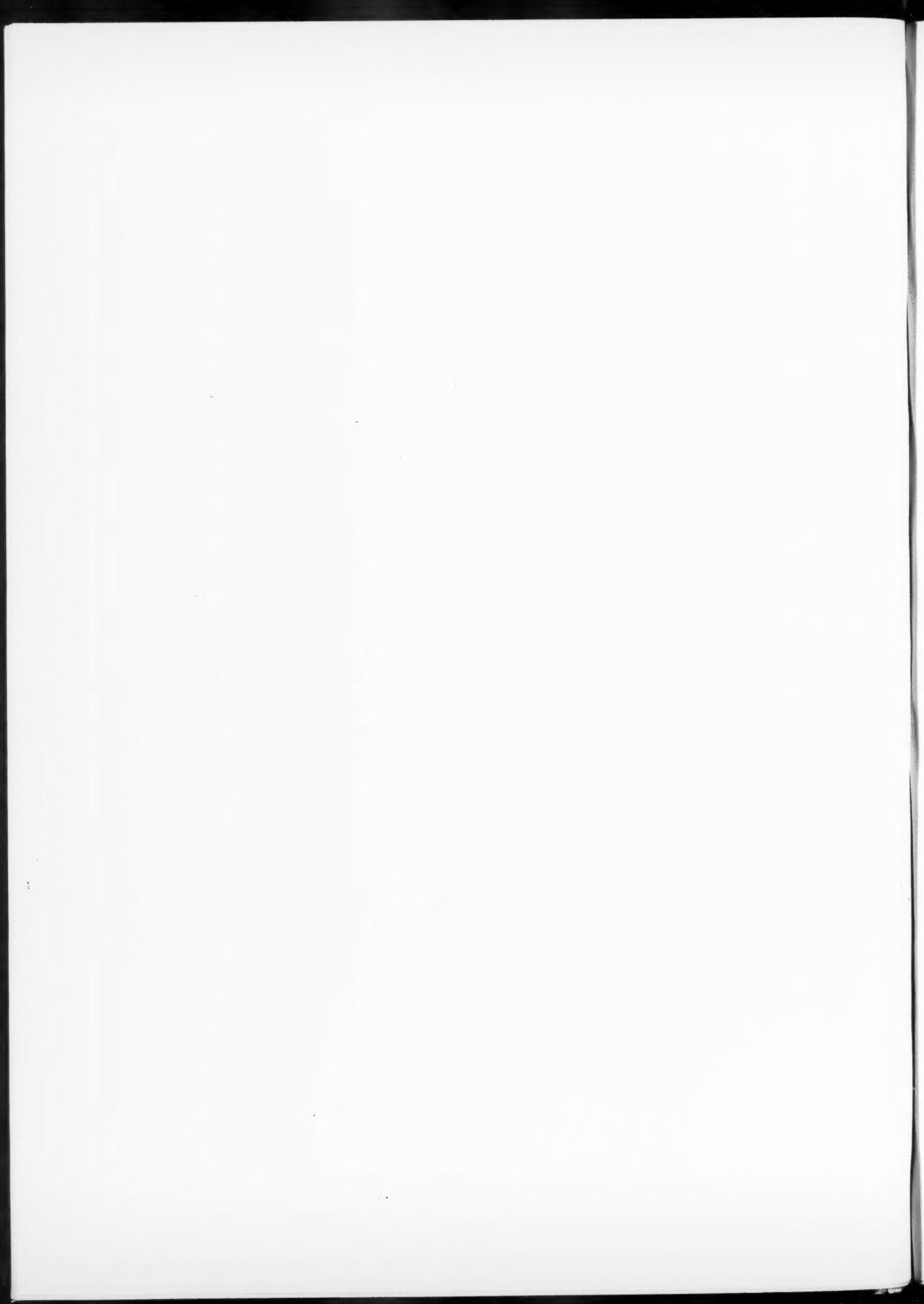
The Gothic character of the figure, above all the character of the drapery, makes this attribution certain. The above-mentioned authors have clearly stated the essential characteristics of the treatment of the drapery during the typical stages of the evolution of French sculpture from the 13th to the 16th centuries.

"In France, the Gothic fold," they say, "is, speaking in a general way, supple and straight, without hard angles, and always drawn in an absolutely comprehensive and logical manner. Such it is in the 13th and during a part of the 14th centuries, and when the school of Dijon, departing from this tradition, complicated the draperies by introducing into them broken folds and sharp angles, it is because of its Flemish origins. When, towards the end of the 15th century, the predominance of this Flemish influence ceases, we see the well-drawn, simple and logical fold come again to the front. That is the fold we find in the early statues from the region of Troyes. Gradually, however, the style again becomes complicated, sharp breaks and angles reappear, similar, but slighter and less ample, to those of the work of the Burgundian School when under Flemish influences. Later on still, meaningless *chiffonages* are added, so that in the end the sculptors lose even the conception of the true beauty of a fold."

Our statue evidently belongs to the period of equilibrium between the Burgundian Flemish style of fold and the *chiffonnée et recroquevillée* drapery which marks the school of Troyes of 1530-



A SAINT: SCHOOL OF CHAMPAGNE, 1515—1525.
Princeton University.



1540. The same qualities of delicacy and simplicity shown in the costume are also found in the veil covering the head, and in the face itself, which is sweet in expression, purely local in type, and has neither the inelegance and coarseness of certain works of the 15th century, nor the too smiling, slightly mannered expression common to statues of the 16th century. It is precisely of the same type as the statues of the Virgin of Brienne-la-Vieille, and of Saint Rémy-sous-Barbuise, described and reproduced in the work of the authors above quoted. These two statues, posed in slightly different ways, show the same long straight folds of the robe, the same veil, and the same type of face, sweet and a little sad. Our statue can also be compared to a large Virgin, unknown at the time the above quoted work was written, and which has since been acquired by the Louvre.¹ And it has great similarities with a number of statues described in the *“Documents de Sculpture française.”*²

From an iconographic standpoint the statue might be taken for a Virgin and Child, with the forearms of the Virgin broken off and the figure of the Child missing. But we cannot find on the figure the place of the child (in statues of this group he is generally held close to his mother's breast); moreover, the left hand is raised a little too high to have been able to support naturally or freely the relatively heavy weight of the little one. In this connection we may also note that in statues of the Virgin the body usually shows more action, because of the weight of the child it carries. Finally the greater number of the Virgins of this group are crowned (although this is not an iconographic detail common to all Gothic sculptures.) The veil, which in our statue completely covers the head and hides the hair, reminds us of statues of female Saints such as those which accompany the Virgin in certain groups of the Entombment; or of that more severe and imposing St. Martha of the Church of the Magdalene at Troyes, with which we are entirely justified to compare it from the point of view of style as well as of iconography. We may therefore think that we have here a saint whose left hand held an open book. MM. Koechlin and Marquet de Vasselot enumerate a large number of such *Saintes au livre* of the period, which they have been unable to identify further. It is reasonable to suppose that these statues or

¹ M. André Michel, who described it in *Les Monuments de Piot* and in his chapter on *Sculptures en France de Louis XI à la fin des Valois* in his *Histoire de l'Art* (Vol. IV, 2nd part, p. 617), unhesitatingly classes it with Virgins of Brienne and Saint Rémy.

² *Moyen Age*, plates CXXXVIII and CXXXIX—*Renaissance*, 1st part, plates LXXI to LXXIV.

statuettes, which the studios of Troyes produced in great numbers for the numerous town and village churches of the region, carried rather vague attributes, and were not distinctly named until the piety or generosity of some worshipper consecrated each one to honor a particular saint of the sacred legend.

What we may be sure of, at any rate, is that we have here one of the most charming products of the school of Champagne, of an art which, if it lacks the noble grandeur of that of the French thirteenth century, and the austere character of that of the fifteenth century, has a most delicate, restrained and intimate beauty all its own.

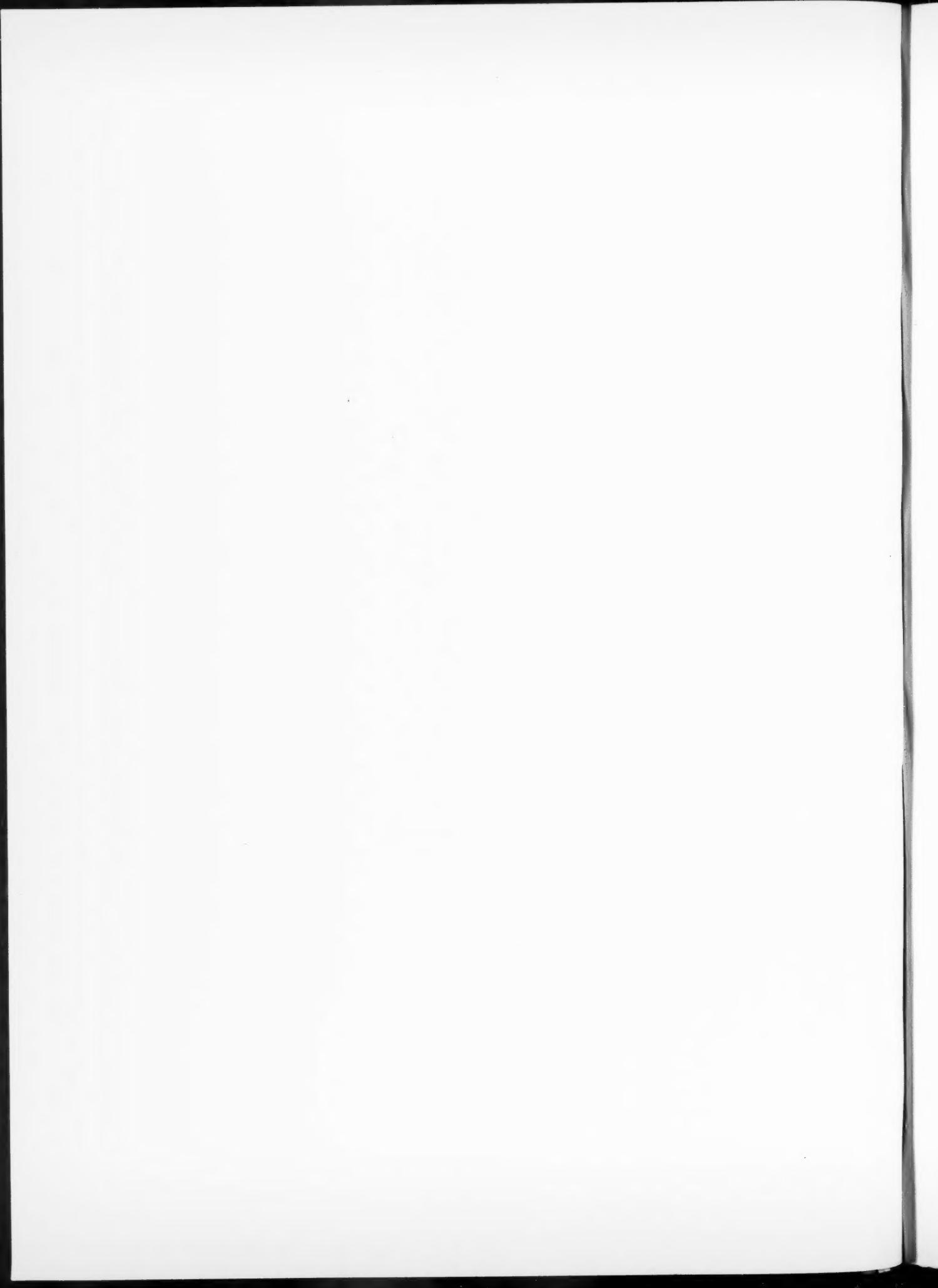
SOME PAINTINGS BY GIOVANNI DI PAOLO : II BY JOSEPH BRECK

MR. PHILIP LEHMAN of New York has recently acquired a large and, for its size, unusually fine Coronation of the Virgin (Fig. 1), by Giovanni di Paolo, formerly in the Alphonse Kahn collection. The panel has a pointed top, is slightly injured along the margins and measures $70\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $51\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Seated on a gray marble throne with pink mouldings and black and gold inlay are the Virgin and her Divine Son. The throne is partly covered by a deep crimson drapery patterned with golden pomegranates. The Madonna is seated at the left and bends her head to receive the jeweled crown which Christ holds above her with both hands. Her white mantle, lined with leafy green and embroidered with gold, is gathered about her in folds whose graceful lines suggest a sheath of flowers. Christ wears a blue robe bordered with gold and lined with green, over a gown of pale rose-color. In the foreground are two little angels making music, one with a portable organ, the other twanging joyously a small harp. Their draperies are delicate shades of rose contrasting with mossy-green. These angels appear again in a picture in the Pieve of S. Croce at Poggioferro. Behind the throne stands a choir of yellow-haired angels clad in garments of pale green and rose. This important picture is not only most attractive in colors, but it has as well the gentleness and reverent spirit of Giovanni's best work.

In *Rassegna d'Arte*, 1912, pp. 162-3, Dr. Paul Schubring published two paintings by Giovanni di Paolo, in the Provincial Museum



Fig. 1. GIOVANNI DI PAOLO: CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN.
Collection of Mr. Philip Lehman, New York.



of Münster, representing the Nativity of St. John the Baptist and his Denunciation of Herod and Herodias. A third painting, Zacharias and the Angel, belonging to this set which probably constituted a small altar-piece or tabernacle, is described by the writer as in private possession in Rome, having come from the collection of Prince Santangelo in Naples. This picture (Fig. 2) has just been acquired by Mr. Lehman and is now reproduced for the first time by the owner's kind permission. As one can see from the illustration it is exceptionally interesting in many ways. The elaborate architecture shows the influence of the frescoes by Domenico di Bartolo, Priamo della Quercia and Vecchietta in the Pellegrinaio of the Spedale at Siena, and as these were executed 1440-43 Dr. Schubring conjectures that the panels with scenes from the life of the Baptist were painted about 1450. For his compositions Giovanni has gone to the celebrated Baptismal Font by Jacopo della Quercia and his co-workers. The painting of John before Herod and Herodias follows pretty closely the relief by Ghiberti, and the Nativity of the Baptist clearly derives from the similar relief by Turino di Sano (or his son, Giovanni di Turino). Mr. Lehman's painting is inspired by Jacopo della Quercia's bronze relief of the same subject. The architectural setting, however, is the invention of the painter and shows admirably his fantasy and decorative feeling. The figures count for little amidst this wilderness of cupolas, arches and slender columns rising from the richly patterned pavement. A replica in rectangular form with modifications in the architectural background exists in a private collection in London.

As might naturally be expected, Mr. D. F. Platt's collection at Englewood, New Jersey, contains, among the numerous Sienese pictures which give to the collection its principal distinction, two characteristic paintings by Giovanni di Paolo. One of these, a Madonna and Child, is unfortunately in very bad condition, although much of its quaint loveliness has survived the ruin of time. The gold has disappeared from the background and the Virgin's robe turned quite black. Charming, however, is the tenderness with which the Christ Child, dressed in a long rose-colored gown, presses His cheek lovingly against the Virgin's. The panel measures 12½ inches by 9 inches.

The second little picture (Fig. 3), a Madonna and Child with Saint Margaret and Saint Catherine of Alexandria, wins our hearts

by its beauty of decoration and virginal charm of sentiment. Seated on a throne covered with a drapery of red and gold, the Virgin holds in her lap the nude Child, Who turns to look at Saint Margaret standing on the right with the conquered dragon beneath her feet. On the left is Saint Catherine daintily holding out in her right hand—as if to amuse the baby—a fragment of the toothed wheel of her martyrdom. Both saints, delightful little maidens, are crowned with double wreaths of roses. Saint Catherine wears a red gown lined with ermine. Saint Margaret's robe is light blue, lined with green; her gown, red and gold. The Virgin's mantle is blue and white, and her gown of red and gold. The background is gold, somewhat rubbed, so that the red foundation shows through, not unpleasantly. The panel, which measures $15\frac{1}{4}$ inches by 8 inches without the frame, was probably the central part of a little house-altar with painted doors. The present frame with folding side-panels is modern.

Giovanni di Paolo is represented in the collection of Mr. John G. Johnson at Philadelphia by two small panels, of which the more interesting, the *voto per tempesta di mare*, has been acquired since the publication of the catalogue of Mr. Johnson's collection. The other little picture, representing Christ bearing His Cross, is described and illustrated in the first volume of the catalogue. The procession to Golgotha issues from a city gate. Two executioners support with Christ the burden of the Cross. A third threatens Him with upraised hand. At the left, driven back by a soldier, are the Virgin Mary and the youthful St. John. At the right other soldiers head the march past the city walls, above which are seen the cupolas and towers of the town. Variegated in color and richly ornamented, this architectural background is perhaps the most interesting part of the picture. The frieze of winged figures which extends the length of the paneled wall deserves notice, as does the sculptured column recalling Trajan's. Dramatic themes, however, were somewhat beyond Giovanni's power as a rule, and the figure of Christ in a long pink gown hardly escapes the charge of caricature, while the executioners are frankly grotesque. But as decoration, as a piece of delightful color, this painting cannot fail to please.

Mr. Johnson's recent purchase is the well-known votive painting (Fig. 1, Part I, p. 180) from the Palmieri-Nuti Collection, shown at the Mostra d'Arte at Siena in 1904, representing shipwrecked mariners appealing to a saint, variously described as St. Dominic or St.

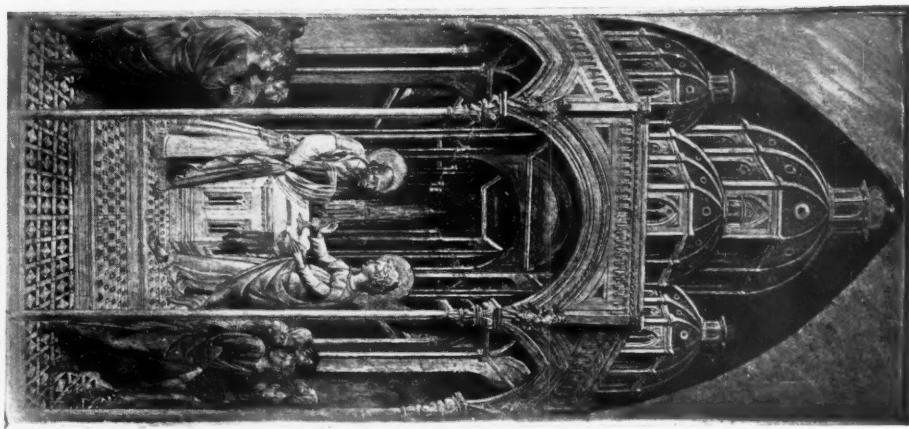


Fig. 2. GIOVANNI DI PAOLO: ZACHARIAS AND THE ANGEL.
Collection of Mr. Philip Lehman, New York.



Fig. 3. GIOVANNI DI PAOLO: MADONNA AND CHILD, WITH SAINT MARGARET AND SAINT CATHERINE.
Collection of Mr. Dan Fellows Platt, Englewood, N. J.

Anthony of Padua,¹ to save them from the perils of the deep. The good saint's offices were efficacious, we may presume, since the little picture we are considering was probably painted in fulfilment of a vow uttered at the time. Storm-tossed, the ship's company kneel on the deck of their dismasted vessel, a sturdy bark, nevertheless, of the wooden-shoe variety which seems, we must confess, in but little danger from the hillocky waves, wherein sports an elongated mermaid. Against the lowering sky, however, are driven here and there in wild confusion bits of spars and flapping sails. On the whole, it was probably fortunate for all concerned that the saint graciously appeared at this moment with his lily and aureole of light to still the raging tempest. As illustration the picture has an unconscious humor which was undoubtedly far from the intention of our worthy painter, who credulously relates, as he was told the survivor's Odyssey of mountainous waves, marvelous mermaid and riven masts. But the artist in him shows when he draws in beautiful pattern the wind-tossed sails. Characteristic, too, of Giovanni is the occasional touch of realism such as the effective lighting of the sky where it meets the serrated waves, strangely contrasting in its naturalism with the bad drawing of the impossible boat. But such contradictions as these are part of Giovanni's charm, and for all his limitations he remains one of Siena's most delightful minor masters.

THE BLACKSTONE COLLECTION IN THE FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY IN CHICAGO · BY HAMILTON BELL

THIS collection of over six thousand specimens from China and five thousand from Tibet is particularly rich in the department of objects illustrating the culture of the Middle Ages in China: the great epochs of Han and T'ang with their connecting six minor dynasties. For the acquisition and arrangement of these the eminent sinologist and antiquarian, Dr. Berthold Laufer, is entirely responsible; their number and variety together with the care and judgment displayed by him in collecting and describing them give them as a whole an importance unequalled by any other collection known to me.

¹ The lily is one of the attributes of both saints, but the habit would appear to be Franciscan, although the figure can hardly represent St. Anthony of Padua, who died while still a young man.

It seems strange that it is not more famous, but few Americans except students are aware of the vast accumulations of Oriental art already in this country and the pace at which they are increasing.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, with over one hundred thousand specimens of the arts of Further Asia, it must be admitted heads the list; Mr. Charles L. Freer's collection, which he has munificently bestowed upon the Nation and which will ultimately be housed in Washington in the Museum he is prepared to build for it, is, because of the high quality rather than the great number of its contents, easily second.

In New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art has at present only made a beginning, having through force of circumstances had its energies directed into other channels. But in the American Museum of Natural History reposes a very important, though small collection of objects, similar to those which make up the Blackstone of the Field Museum, brought from China by the same distinguished archaeologist in 1903-04 at the expense of Mr. Jacob H. Schiff.

But my desire is to direct the attention of students to a few of the most interesting features of the Field Museum Collection. A very remarkable Han jar is decorated on its unglazed surface with leaf and diaper ornaments impressed by means of a stamp, in addition to which are a mask and dragon-like creatures modeled separately in high relief and stuck on. These have been applied upside down, an apparent perversity which Dr. Laufer is disposed to ascribe to magical or Shamanistic intentions on the part of its maker. Much of the unglazed Han pottery seems to have been painted, mostly red, black and white.

Turning to the glazed wares of this epoch one is amazed at the variety of color displayed. Han glaze has almost come to be synonymous with a leaf green which has to a great extent oxidized into iridescence, but here we have greens of every shade and tone from almost yellow to nearly blue, some almost black, browns, yellows and reds both bright and dark. Almost all of the familiar forms are found with these various colored glazes: Hill jars and censers, granary jars, bowls, models of stoves and other domestic utensils.

Probably the most interesting discoveries of this period are jars of the familiar Han shape, of a heavy, hard porcellanous pottery or stoneware, thinly glazed. They differ from other ceramic pro-



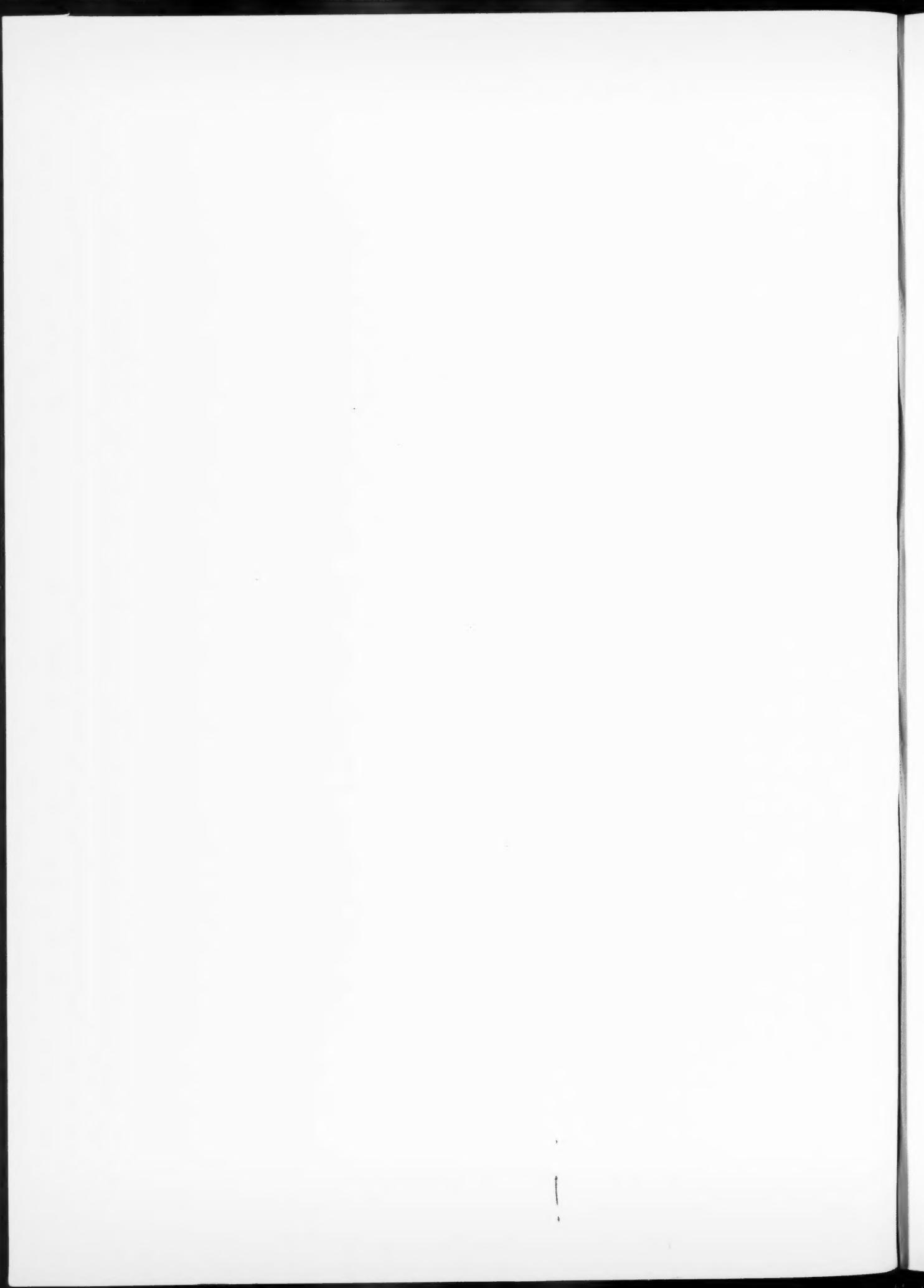
Fig. 1. PORCELLANOUS JAR: HAN DYNASTY (206 B.C.—221 A.D.).

Blackstone Collection, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.

Fig. 2. BRONZE MIRROR: T'ANG DYNASTY (618—907 A.D.).

Blackstone Collection, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.

Fig. 3. BRONZE VESSEL: CHOU DYNASTY (1122—1049 B.C.).



ductions of the period in the composition of the clay and the technique of the glazing. They are made of a highly kaolinic, steel-hard clay, coming very near to that used in the Sung and Yuan periods; although the shapes and ornamentation of these pieces are absolutely characteristic of Han.

Chinese scholars are inclined to regard this as the so-called Han *t'zu* which was supposed to be lost. The word *T'zu* for porcelain occurs first in Han times; these are the first finds of anything that can be reasonably identified with the class of pottery so designated, and must be regarded as the precursor of genuine porcelain.

The jar illustrated (Fig. 1) was found in a grave with a cast iron stove which bears a well-attested Han inscription; and this brings us to the second discovery of extreme interest; that at this period the Chinese were familiar with the manufacture and use of cast iron; besides the stove just mentioned, others circular and horse-shoe shaped, cooking pots, jars like those of pottery, chariot wheel naves, swords and spears, knives, chisels, seals and even a bell, of the shape ascribed to Chou, with knobs the striking of which brings out different notes, are all found of this seemingly unsuitable material. The probability is that but for the tendency of iron to disintegrate, the finds of it would have been much more numerous (Fig. 4).

But it is when we come to T'ang times that we are struck with the richness and variety of the pottery wares and the forms which they assumed. It is safe to say that in no other room in the world can we obtain so complete an insight into the civilization of this splendid era. It is hard to select where all is so absorbing.

Though T'ang records abound with reference to porcelain and Arab traders of that day mention "vases made of very fine clay as transparent as glass, allowing the water to be seen through them," none has so far been found earlier than Sung. Still there are here some pieces of fine thin pottery, glazed grayish yellow-white, of a very Sung type.

The figure pieces of man and beast predominate both by their number and their importance over any vessels, beautiful though some of these are. Dr. Laufer states that he knows of no figures in the round which can be dated with authenticity earlier than T'ang. Those at the Field Museum are mostly, if not exclusively, from the provinces of Honan and Shensi, and it is interesting to note that those from the first mentioned province are invariably the finer;

the human figures more spirited and characterful, the animals more varied in pose and natural in treatment, but it is remarkable that all the horses, even those modeled with the most fire, have all four feet on the ground; there are none which suggest the Colleoni or the Parthenon. However there are one or two startlingly realistic animals, notably a shaggy camel who with lifted head and open mouth protests against rising under its load as ordered by its Turkish rider, and a sleeping dog that might almost have been modeled by Barye.

As an agricultural community the Chinese naturally held the domestic animals in high regard, so we find the camel, horse, ass, ox, sheep, pig, poultry, dog in great number and variety. The cat was not introduced into China from India until later in the Middle Ages.

Carts are also found, usually two-wheeled and drawn by a bullock, which would seem to connote the use of the plough in agriculture.

A group from one and the same grave at Wo fung kung, south of Singan in Shensi, will show how the rank and station of the departed was indicated by these burials. The owner of this would seem to have been a prosperous farmer or trader and was supposed to need in the future, as in this life, a camel, a saddled horse, a bull, two sheep, an armed watchman and three women servants. For supernatural protection these were accompanied by a winged sphinx with a puck-like face, large ears and a long, twisted top knot, called t'u' K'uai, the earth spirit whose presence was regarded as protective.

This last "familiar" if so he may be regarded, takes various semi-animal forms, some very suggestive of the Sassanian "griffons," part lion, part bull, often winged and with human countenances; these in all probability may be traced to the influence of similar monsters in earlier Assyrian art.

Personages of higher rank than this worthy were attended by more numerous and varied cortèges. The mounted figures both of men and women, so common in every collection of T'ang art, were arranged in the grave preceding and following the coffin as escort. Such, too, were the warriors afoot and on horseback, whose armor both of plate and chain mail and conical caps of metal, or huge and fantastically winged casques of the utmost elaboration of the armorer's craft, yield nothing in completeness of protection or

decorative effect to the highest development of European panoply. Neither was the spiritual welfare of the departed neglected; we find figures of priests, two types of Manichaeans, others probably Taoist and Buddhist.

Still more curious and interesting are the provisions for the entertainment of the dead. Dr. Laufer has recorded for us in *Chinese Grave Sculptures of the Han Period* that even at that early date it was the custom as it is to-day in China to provide dramatic and circus performances at funerals for the enlivenment of the survivors, and these were at that time often recorded on the walls of their tombs. Under T'ang it was the custom to provide the dead man also with a company of players and jugglers in clay.

Quite the most interesting and artistically accomplished of the figures in the Blackstone Collection are those of dwarfs and actors. These are particularly free and spirited in action, and quite wonderfully modern—as we should say—in technique (Figs. 6—8).

The dwarfs and many of the actors are strangely un-Chinese in type, recalling the fact stated in the T'ang annals that in this era dwarfs were sent from Samarkand as tribute; one of those in this collection, it will be noticed, is obviously of negroid physiognomy. Clowns with stiff beards, upturned moustaches of ancient Turkish fashion, and hooked noses altogether Semitic in appearance, present an extraordinary similarity to the heads which Professor Petrie discovered in Memphite tombs and classes as caricatures of Scythians. A similar figure in the British Museum is labeled "Han or slightly later." Dr. Laufer notes in the work just quoted, that in the modern Chinese theatre the fool still appears with a whitened face and big turned-up moustaches.

The most remarkable presentations of character and naturalness are the figure of the wrinkled old man with a clean-shaved face, who reminds one of Got, the great French comedian, and that of a youth in a long robe, very highly modeled, which retains traces of gold and color, white, red, black and blue. Almost a duplicate of this exists in the British Museum, but the head, which also is identical, is turned the other way, and looks to the left instead of to the right. One wonders if these figures were not made up, as we know the Tanagra figurines were, from separate molds, which admitted of great variety in the position of identical heads, arms, legs, hands and feet.

The coiffure of this lad is extraordinarily suggestive of that of the sons of the Prince Shotoku in the portrait ascribed to the Corean Prince Asa, preserved in the Imperial Household Collection. As this was painted in 597 A.D. the Chicago figure and the painting are possibly contemporaneous. The hair-dressing of many of the ladies too is remarkably like that to be seen in Japanese sculpture and pictures, as is the general disposition of their robes, which brings home to us the fact that the Island Empire derived an enormous part of its culture and refined civilization from China at this epoch, and that while foreign intercourse and invasion brought changes to the Continental, the insular community preserved with but slight modification the original characteristics.

Some of this T'ang pottery shows unmistakable influence from India, Central and Western Asia, as for instance on some vessels appear Naga and the Garuda bird, and a female demon siren-like with birds' wings and claws irresistibly recalls a Greek harpy possibly by way of Gandhara.

Persian art, too, through Sassanian channels has left its impress on the art of T'ang. The not unfamiliar amphora-shaped jug or vase which is found in many collections appears here in a peculiarly elegant and ornate specimen, with ornaments, which are almost Saracenic, molded in relief and stuck on before firing. The sphinx-like monsters, many of them, strongly recall such griffins or leonine creatures as are common on Sassanian pateræ, silks and seals, whence they were freely adopted by Eastern and Western alike. Prototypes of these may be seen on gold disks in the Oxus Treasure or silver dishes from Perm. A remarkable connecting link between these and those earlier originals from Nimrud is a bronze lion found in the Helmund River in Afghanistan, now in the British Museum. It is labeled "probably Bactrian of the Third Century B.C." Winged, griffin-headed, horned, with a mane that on the crest is hogged like a polo pony's, and on the throat and chest foliated like an acanthus leaf, his tail, curled up into a ring, forms a handle with a leaf on top in lieu of a tuft on the end; he reminds one at once of the Hispano-moresque *aqua manile* and of the Chinese bronze wine vessels shaped like weird monsters which may have originated in Chou or even Shang times, but became popular under Sung.

While Dr. Laufer holds strongly that no figures modeled in the full round have so far been found to which authentic dates can be

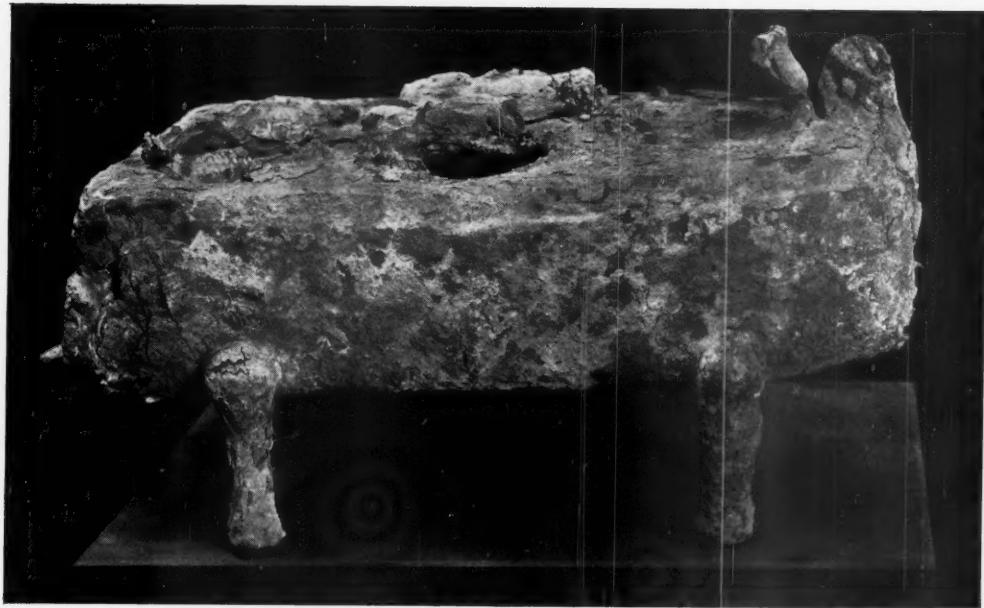
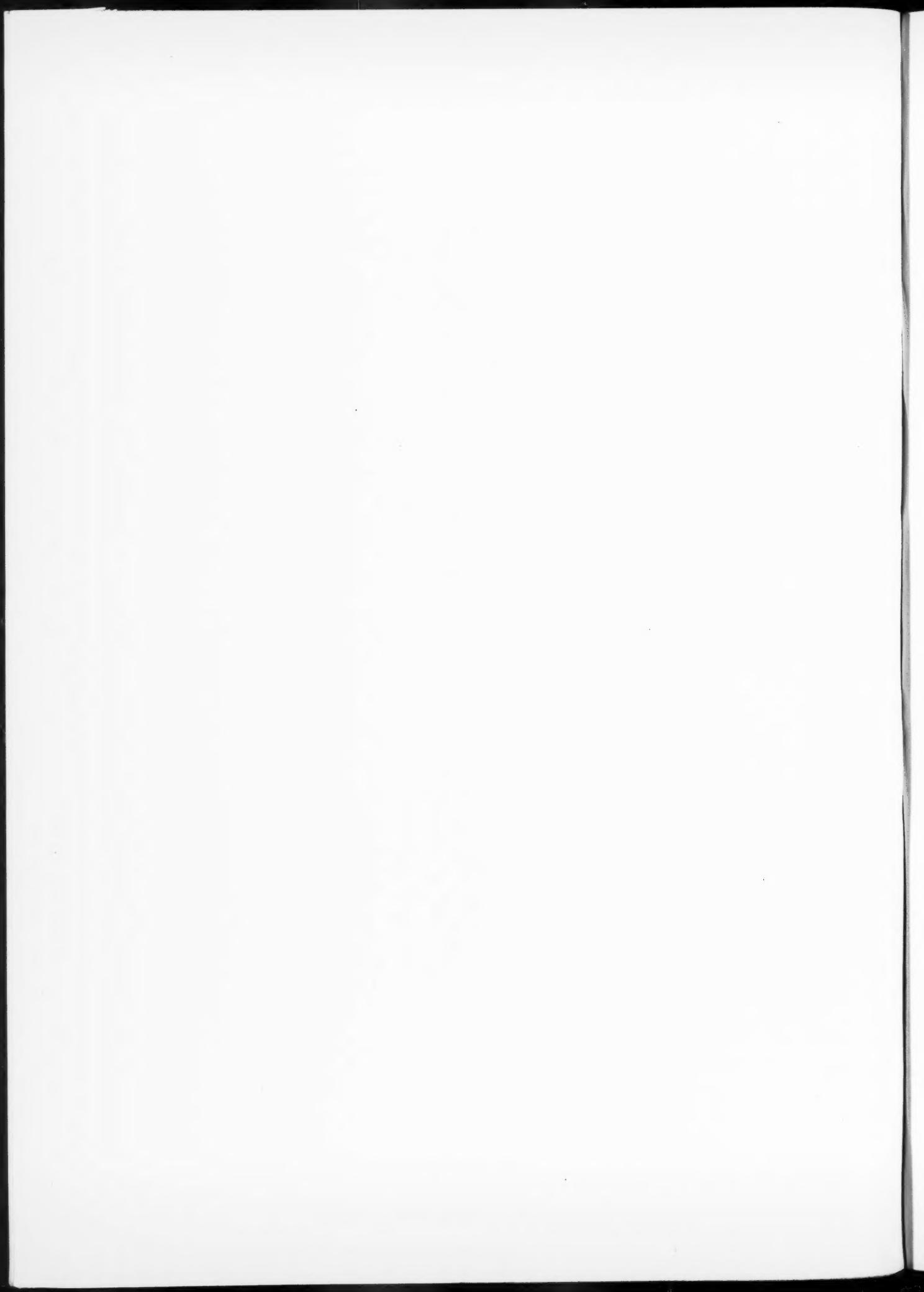


Fig. 4. CAST-IRON STOVE: HAN DYNASTY (206 B.C.—221 A.D.).
Blackstone Collection, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.



Fig. 5. BRONZE FITTINGS OF CHARIOT WHEEL-NAVES: CHOU PERIOD (1122—1049 B.C.).
Blackstone Collection, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.



given earlier than the T'ang dynasty, yet he divides those which he has collected into Archaic, that is to say Prehistoric, and Mediæval dating from the Fourth to the Ninth Century, A.D.

The earliest prehistoric figures would seem to be solid clay figures of both sexes and extremely primitive aspect, though still unmistakably Chinese in physiognomical character. They are modeled, not molded, in a crude manner; although the heads have a certain quality and charm, the bodies and limbs are feeble and shapeless. The arms are separate from the shoulders and pivoted on wooden pegs. Their discoverer believes them to have been of Shamanistic origin used in magic rites to ward off evil spirits and avert disease. Similar figures are used by the Shamans in Southern Siberia at the present day. A pair was buried beside each coffin to dispel evil influences, and a figure of a Shaman wielding a wooden spear, which has rotted away, doubtless served a similar purpose; this last type survived into a more enlightened age, as there is a similar figure from T'ang.

Another very remarkable series of archaic figures is considered by Dr. Laufer to represent not the living adherents of the dead man but his ancestors. They were cast in molds and are all much alike. Their chief characteristic is their flatness, although their heads are sometimes rounder than the rest of their figures. Their skirts spread out about their feet as if wadded like a kimono, and their hands are folded and hidden in their long sleeves, giving them altogether the strangest Japanese appearance.

There is a most interesting series of T'ang figures showing the development of the representation of Yama, the God of Death, and one of the Judges in Hell, whose worship was very popular under this dynasty. At first it would seem he was presented as a bloated, tailed and horned monster, with clawed feet and hands and the head of a demoniac bull, flaming at every conceivable or inconceivable point, sometimes with painted leopard-like spots on his garments, sometimes unclad; one bestrides a squealing sow of appalling naturalness. By degrees his visage becomes more human, less bull-like and more like John Bull; though still horned, he otherwise much resembles the warriors of the period in full plate armor and stands upon a crouching bull. Later his horns and flames become the ornaments of his huge fantastic morion and finally but for his characteristic action, one arm threateningly raised, the other akimbo on his

hip and his perch on the bull, he is not to be told from the other warriors whose function is to guard the tomb.

Of the jades in the Blackstone Collection Dr. Laufer himself has written one of the most exhaustive and valuable monographs in the whole library of the Orientalist.

There is besides a large and highly important collection of ancient bronzes which yet awaits arrangement at the hands of its collector (Figs. 3 and 5).

One of the mirrors of T'ang design and workmanship is so extraordinary and so to speak un-Chinese in its arrangement, though of the highest class and of a perfection of treatment only to be found in the finest T'ang work in this kind, that a few moments may well be spent in consideration of it. To begin with, it is asymmetrical, an absolutely unique state of affairs so far as I have been able to discover. It has no central boss, no concentric borders of ornament, and no rim or edge. It consists of a flat, rather thin disc of bronze $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, which has been treated with black lacquer; these old lacquered mirrors are held in the highest esteem by Japanese connoisseurs, who pay as fancy prices for them as we do for hawthorn or peachblow vases. The ornament consists of portions of three different arrangements of lotus blossoms of a perfection of design and execution which I have never seen equalled, and the like of which is probably only to be found among those peerless mirrors treasured in the Shosoin at Nara. The smaller segment of the three I imagine to be a portion of the lotus-flower boss; a mirror No. 07214 in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, with somewhat similar decoration, but perhaps not so consummate, has a boss of just this description. I venture to think that we have before us a fragment of a very large and splendid T'ang mirror, which, having been broken, was, for the sake of its extraordinary beauty, ground into circular shape and used as a mirror, just as we find fragments of the glorious Chün yao glazes ground into regular shapes and used as personal ornaments by the art-loving Chinese (Fig. 2).

Be all this as it may, this piece of bronze, scarcely more than four inches across, is one of the highest achievements of early Oriental art anywhere to be found.

Other works in bronze are numerous, gilt Buddhistic statuettes, several as old as the North Wei dynasty—386-532 A.D.—many of them of extreme beauty. Curious to a degree is a statue of Bodhi-



Fig. 6.

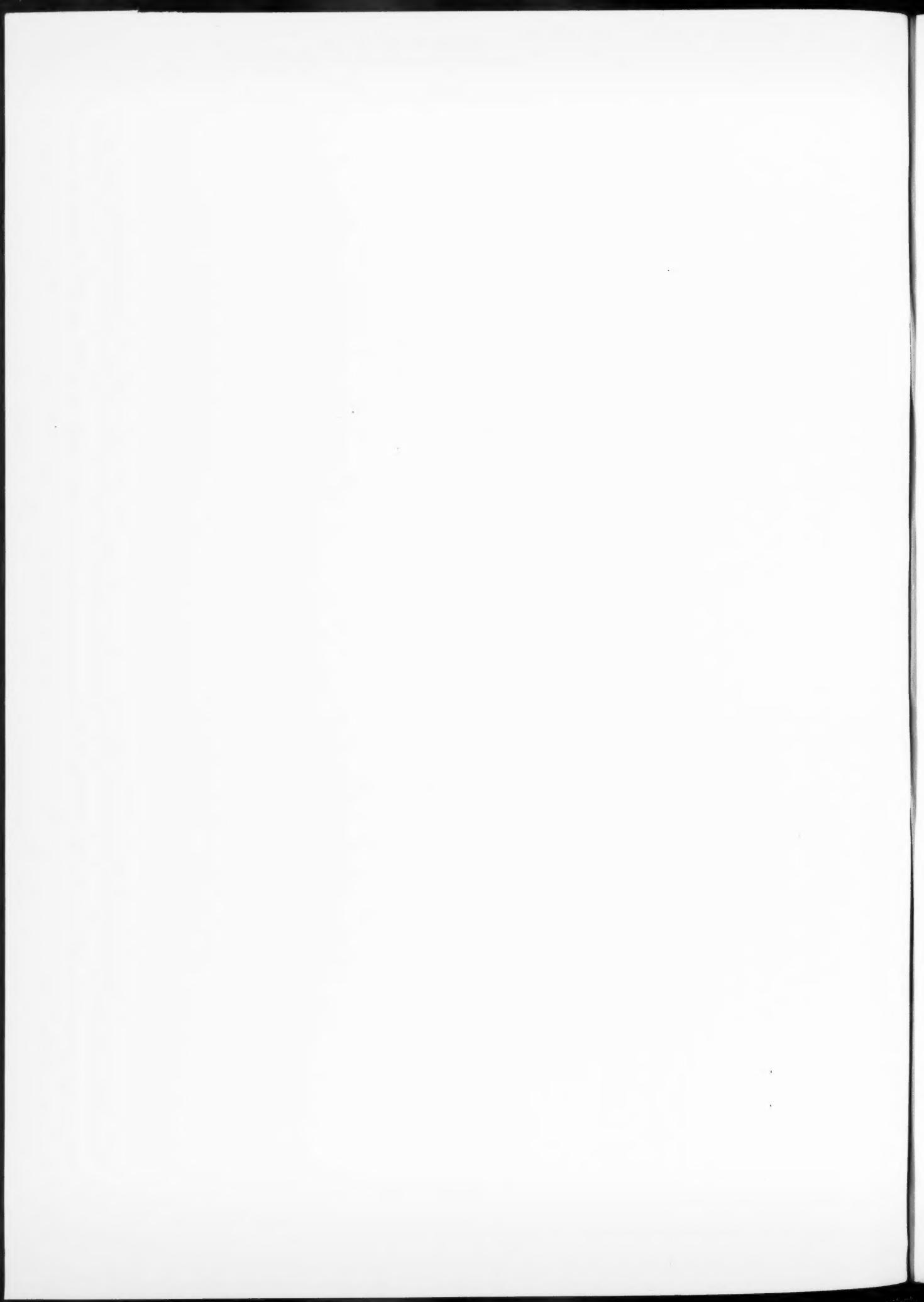


Fig. 7.

CLAY FIGURES OF ACTORS: T'ANG DYNASTY (618—907 A.D.).
Blackstone Collection, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.



Fig. 8.



dharma about two feet high, seated in meditation, and very simple and dignified in air. This is of T'ang workmanship and is made of cast iron.

Still we have not exhausted the treasures of the Blackstone Collections; of stone sculptures there are a great number, an exquisite T'ang Bodhisattva comparable to the gem of the Boston Museum or that perhaps still more wonderful from Lung men, in Mr. Charles L. Freer's collection at Detroit; a marble sarcophagus of T'ang, dated 673 A.D., for an account of which I must refer my readers to Dr. Laufer's own fascinating monograph on the subject. The museum also contains a coffin or a sarcophagus of much the same shape, though considerably smaller, made of red pottery with a green glaze, dating likewise from the T'ang period. There is a smaller stone chest of the same period incised, like the sarcophagus, all over with lovely patterns, in this instance mostly floral. This was destined, according to tradition, for the hoarding of precious manuscripts of the Scriptures which were buried with the Buddhist monks at this time. Enough has been said to show that the Field Museum in Chicago may claim a high place among the collections of Far Eastern Art in America.

THE ART OF ALEXANDER WYANT · BY ELIOT CLARK

THE early period of Wyant's work may conveniently be placed before 1869. It was in this year that he suffered from a stroke of paralysis which deprived him of the use of his right hand.

Brought up in the little country town of Defiance, Ohio, where he was born in 1836, Wyant had very little to encourage his artistic aspirations. Not until twenty-one years of age had he an opportunity of seeing any paintings of importance. On a visit to Cincinnati in 1857 he was fortunate in seeing some pictures by George Inness and a little later met the painter in New York. The encouragement given him by Inness and the opportunity of seeing other pictures seems to have definitely determined him to become a painter.

Thus we see that the work of this early period covers little more than ten years. It is characterized by a certain photographic fidelity to nature at the expense of tonal relation and simplicity of design. It is rightly associated with the work of the Hudson River School.

The angle of vision is wide and extended; the subject grand and heroic; mountains, rivers, valleys—scenic, panoramic in effect. We have echoes of the romanticism of Scott, of the traditional pictorial form of Claude.

Much of this early work was later destroyed, though we have some notable examples which tell us of the painter's conceptions of that time. "On the Ohio River," painted in 1867, was recently seen at the American Art Galleries. The painter's ideal was dangerously near the photographic vision, a kind of scientific reality lacking selection and distinction. In fact, Wyant studied photographs very attentively at this period. There is no thought of focal concentration or simplicity of design; the foreground is as minutely elaborated as the middleground or distance. We do not see any pictorial preference. In color it is consistent, though monotonous, lacking direct observation from nature. In painting it is thin, unexpressive and "tight." It is an example more of patience than of art, and is therein significant, for it shows persistent endeavor and perseverance and a very faithful study of the forms of nature.

We may also mention: "Among the Alleghanies," showing mountains and lake over a dark foreground; "Mount Equinox," dated 1866, a romantic subject of mountain and stream with approaching storm; "Scene on the Upper Potomac, West Virginia"; and an idealized subject, "Landscape—Mountain Scene," typical of the style of the time.

The most important and distinguished example of this early period, however, is "The Mohawk Valley," dated 1866 (Fig. 1), in the Metropolitan Museum. We feel that when Wyant signed this picture he was justly proud of his work and had successfully achieved his early aspirations. He had assimilated the methods and teaching of the time and indicated the way of future development. Despite the fact that the detail is so carefully and minutely elaborated the interest is not divided or scattered. We see in this picture a unity and singleness of effect which is seldom found in the works of Wyant's contemporaries, Bierstadt, Church, Cole or Durand. We note also a more sensitive observation of natural effect, a more subtle appreciation of diffused light, and as always in the later work of the painter an admirable reserve and restraint.

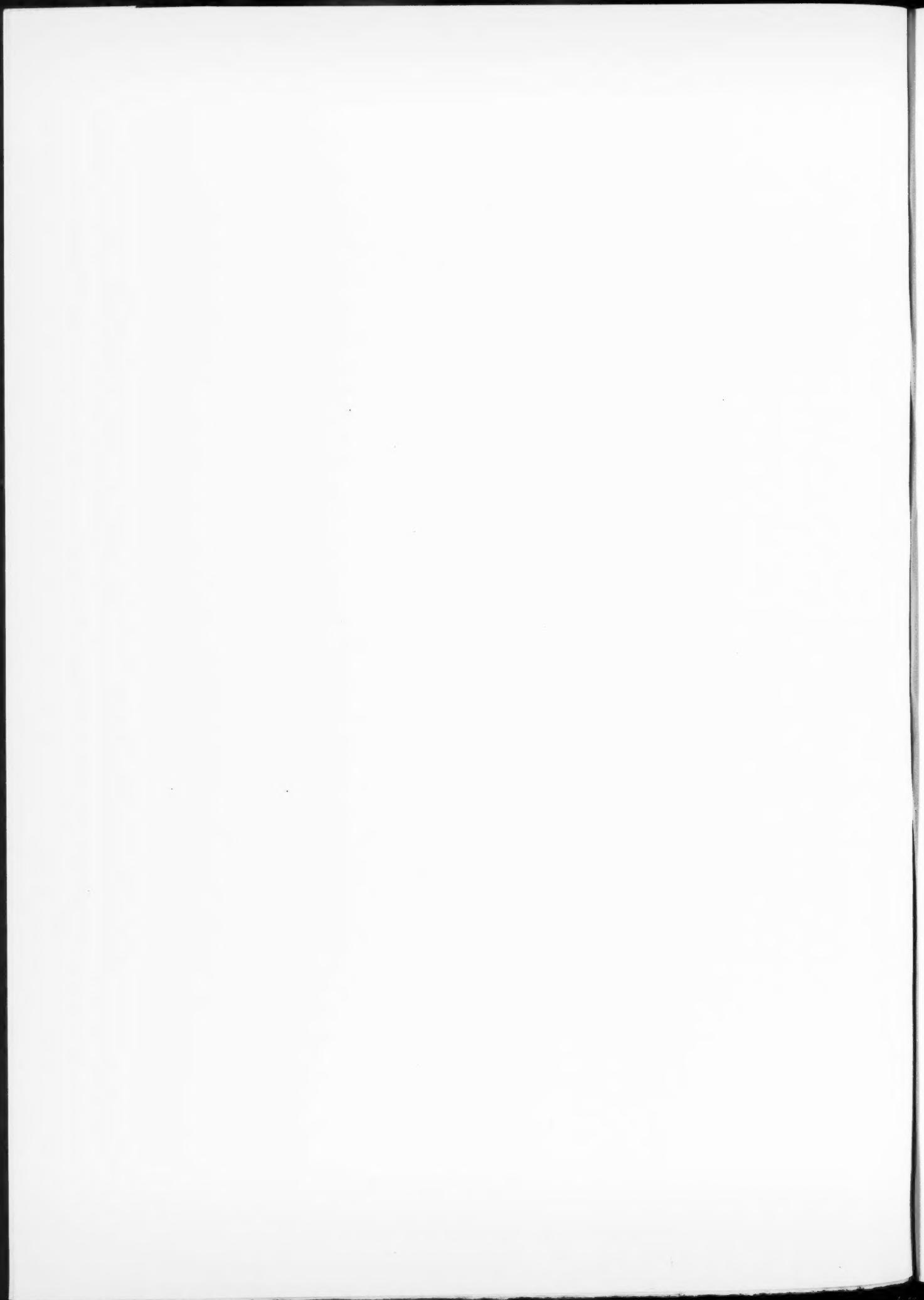
The method of painting is sound and healthy, as the picture is sufficient witness, for it has not in any way deteriorated, faded or



Fig. 1. ALEXANDER H. WYANT: THE MOHAWK VALLEY.
Hearn Collection, Metropolitan Museum, New York.



Fig. 3. ALEXANDER H. WYANT: A GLIMPSE OF THE SEA.
Hearn Collection, Metropolitan Museum, New York.



cracked. The composition having been conceived, the subject was carefully drawn on the canvas. Then with a transparent wash of warm color (probably burnt sienna and black) the forms were fully rendered. On this warm monotone the cooler opaque colors were painted, care being taken to keep the darker masses quite thin and transparent, and the lights "loaded" with body pigment. In this manner of painting, the picture need not be completed while the paint is still wet, as is more or less the case with the present-day painter who endeavors to produce his effect "à premier coup." One can carry out the painting part by part without losing the unity of effect and the general tonality; moreover, there is a gain in richness of color, in transparency, and a freedom from paintiness which characterizes so many efforts of to-day. This method Wyant followed in all of his early works and also in most of his later pictures, though he added "texture" which gave to his pigment a more interesting quality and fullness of tone and to his forms greater freedom and suggestiveness.

But Wyant had something more to say than we find expressed in this picture of "The Mohawk Valley" so distinctive in his early career. The later style was brought about by two causes which came more or less at the same time. The first was due to Wyant's feeble health. As a result of paralysis of the right side he was obliged to work with his left hand. This at first must have been a great handicap, but he came to see that a certain generalization of form gave a greater simplicity of effect, and added to this he felt the need of expressing something more than fact. It happened that about this time the Barbizon painters were being talked of and examples of their work were shown at the galleries of Cottier and Son. Wyant immediately responded to the intention and significance of these pictures. Viewed then by a very doubtful and unappreciative audience, it required a kindred spirit to recognize their artistic value.

We can see why Rousseau would so strongly appeal to Wyant. He was essentially classic, in the sense of the perfect unison of form and idea. Moreover, his idea was not merely the repetition of elegant lines and meaningless compositions. It was inspired by the simple, homely landscape of the north, by the communion of mind with matter. Thus it was a reaction against what had falsely been called "classic." Rousseau was austere. His painting had an almost religious reverence for the subject.

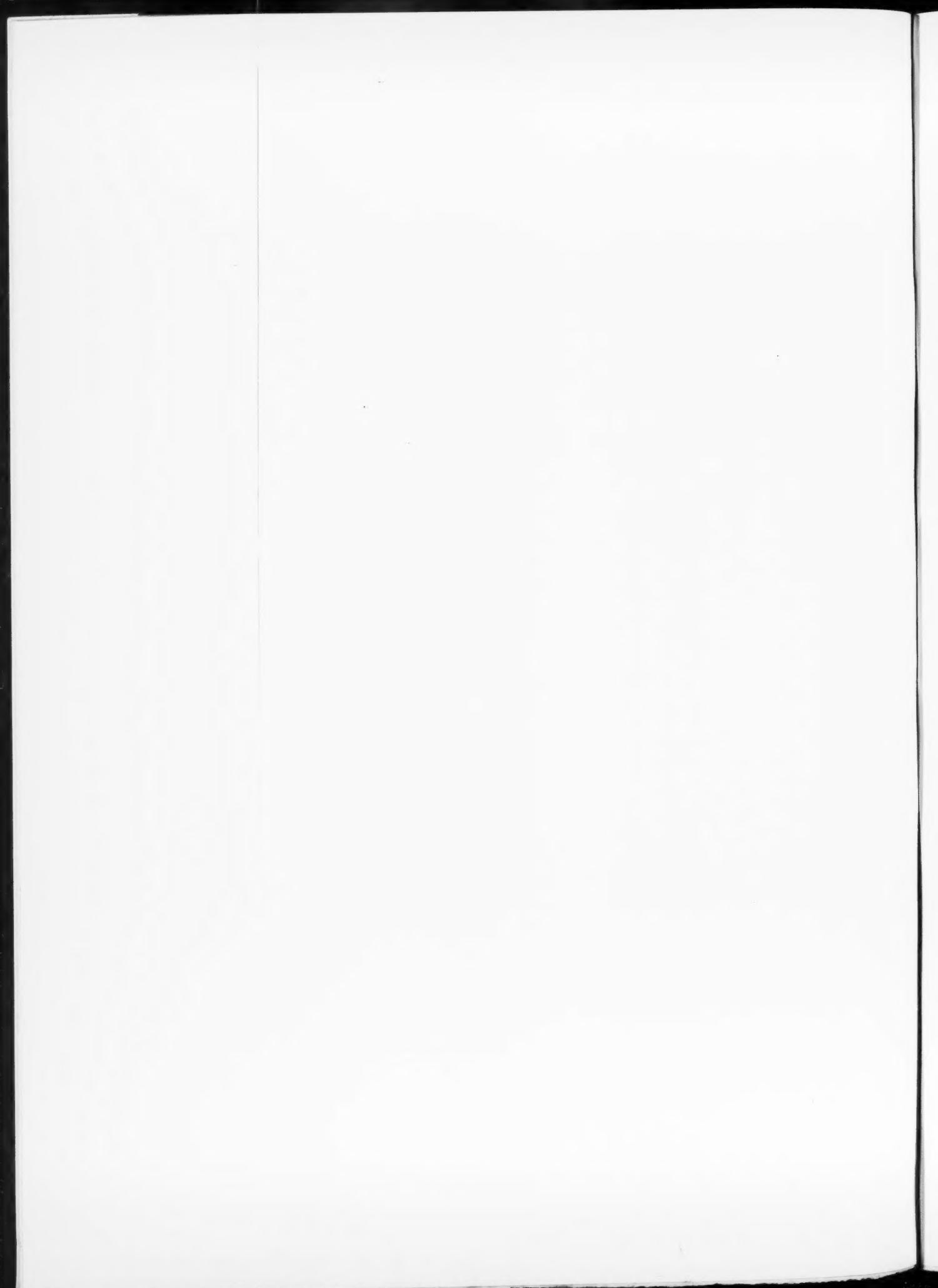
As a result of this twofold influence, Wyant became more reflective and also more intimately responsive to nature. Corot said "one must seek above all else in a picture for some manifestation of the artist's spiritual state, for a portion of his reverie." This sentiment is echoed in the later works of Wyant. It is the mental mood inspired by nature that becomes significant. We do not see the same photographic attention to fact, but it is the diffused light on things and their illusive significance that attracts the painter. Thus in his "Passing Clouds" (Fig. 2) the forms of the landscape are subordinated to the dominant pictorial motive which is centered in the dark, wind-blown trees against the light, surging forms of flying clouds. The theme becomes, as it were, the symbol of change. The drawing has more relation to the significance of the whole than the mere record of a part; the values serve not only to illumine the fact but to enlarge upon the illusive idea of light and ethereal expanse. Thus we see the master's problem in chiaroscuro is essentially the same as Rembrandt's, in so much as it is the gradual gradation of the light going into darkness that interests both painters. The pictorial interest is attained through change and sequence of values. In this picture there is no surface that is flat. All of the values lead to the point of focal concentration in the center of the dark tree. Here the eye finds rest. In consequence, although the motive is expressive of change and action, we have a perfect adjustment and balance which creates repose in change.

This interest in chiaroscuro, this expression in light and shadow, became the dominant theme of the painter. It was his limitation as well as his strength. His strength, because he worked within a given limitation. The charm of design,—the pattern produced for æsthetic beauty of arrangement and the expression of ideas through association of shapes and colors,—was not a part of the painter's thought.

It follows, therefore, that Wyant was not a colorist in the full sense of the term. He was particularly sensitive to neutral colors, precisely because he was interested in problems of light as seen in value relations. Most of his pictures represent effects in grays. His colors were as the barks of the trees, the gray of the moss, of the rocks, of mountain streams; colors of the things he loved so well. He hardly ever attempted sunlight. To introduce sunlight was but to change the colors so surpassingly beautiful. We must not forget that Wyant was an invalid. Color was too decidedly emotional for the



FIG. 2. ALEXANDER H. WYANT: PASSING CLOUDS.
Collection of Mr. Emerson McMillin, New York.



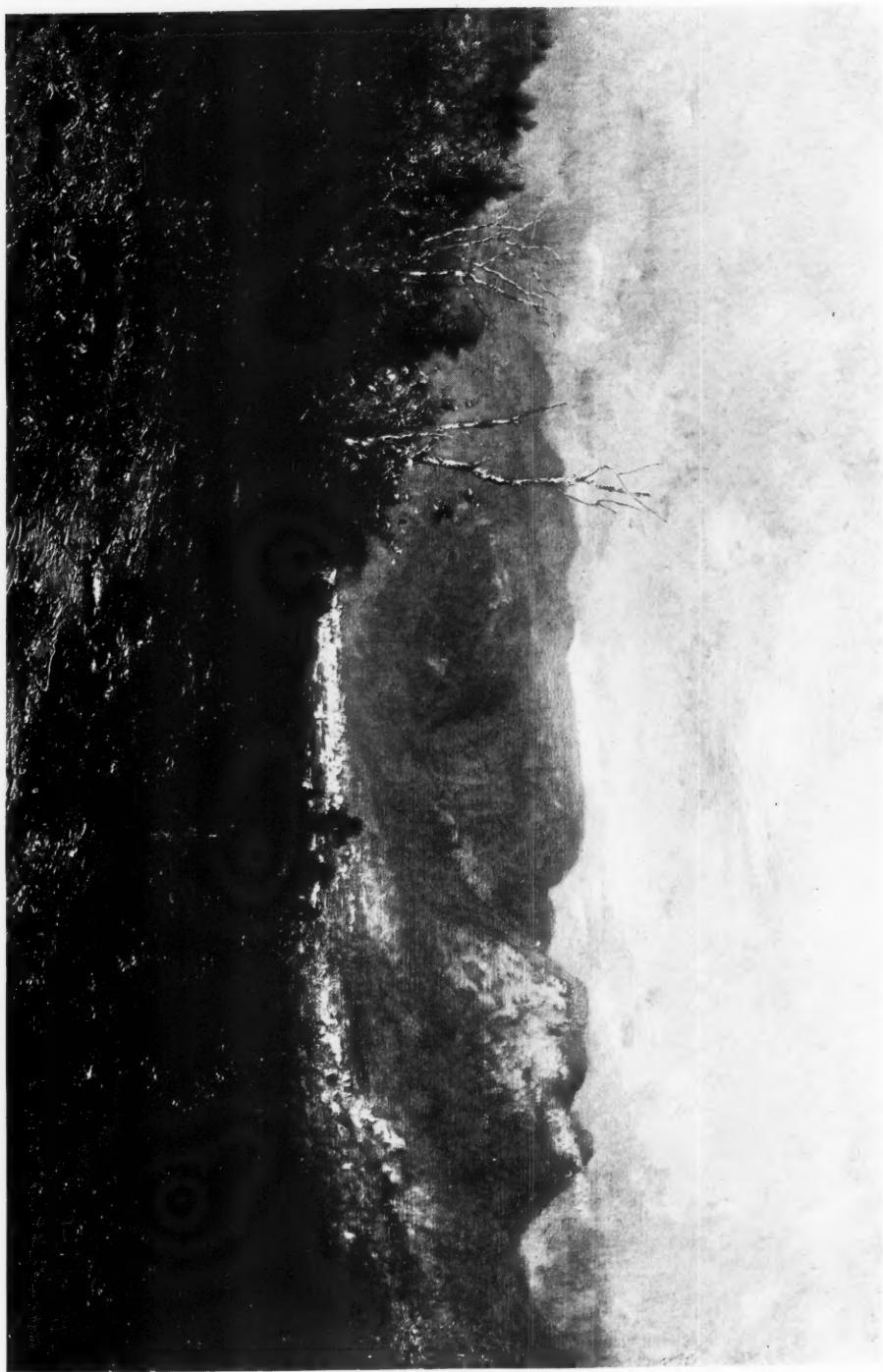
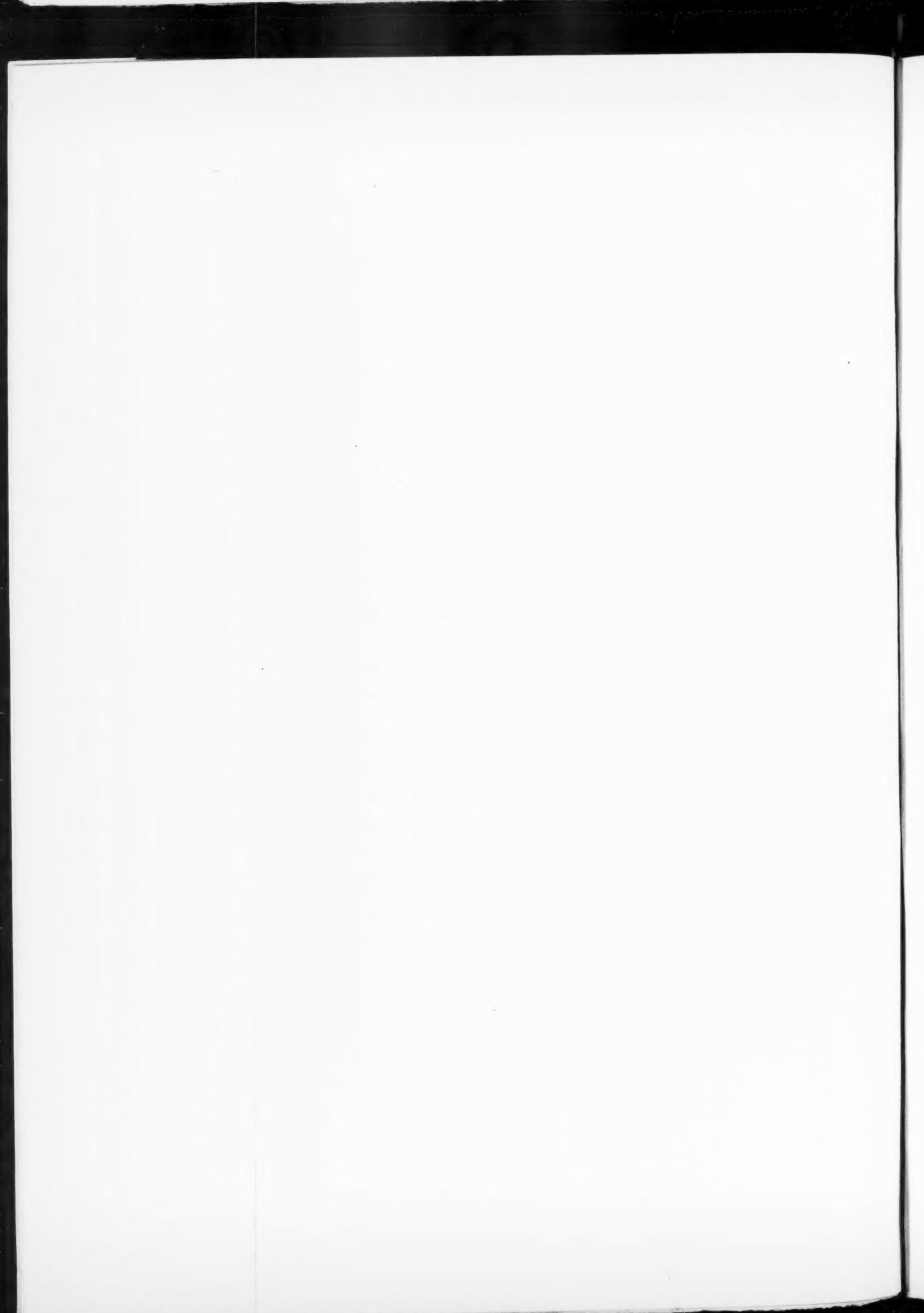


Fig. 4. ALEXANDER H. WYANT: A SUNLIT VALE.
Collection of Mr. H. H. Benedict, New York.



weak nerves of our painter, too blatant, too evident, too strong. His mood was reflective, quiet, serene, pensive. The subdued lights appealed to him more intimately. This mood we see echoed in most of his pictures.

What beautiful suggestion and poetic inspiration we find in the picture "A Glimpse of the Sea" (Fig. 3). There is much thought within a very little space. The color of the landscape is rich, warm and subdued. It shows a little inroad from the sea on either side of which are dark, picturesque tree forms leading the eye to the beautiful sky beyond. Wyant often remarked that the key to a landscape was in the sky. If one could paint a sky he could paint a landscape. This is interesting to note, not only because it indicates the essential relation of land and sky, but shows how much the painter was interested in sky forms and their mysterious suggestion. In fact, we might say that in almost all of Wyant's finest pictures it is the sky that is of dominant interest, that indicates the spiritual state of the painter; and that the landscape serves as a beautiful foil or frame to bring out its subtle and illusive gradations.

It also gives to his pictures a great sense of expanse and vastness. Though most of the landscapes are small in size they are always big in feeling. This sense of distance and expanse, of the grandeur of nature, is, perhaps, more forcibly expressed in the art of landscape painting than in any other medium of expression. It gives to landscape a decidedly religious significance. In "A Sunlit Vale" (Fig 4), owned by Mr. H. H. Benedict, this feeling for space and atmosphere, for the grandeur of nature, is very wonderfully expressed. We look from the shadow of a dark, sloping mountainside to the sunlit valley and distant mountain range beyond. Over all is the spirit of change, of fast-fleeting sunlight and shadow. The sky is remarkably fine in its rendering of atmospheric perspective and change of aerial planes. It does not seem to stop at the frame, but we feel its great expanse soaring heavenward to the zenith and around. This is always the dominant mood of the painter. It is his voice, his message.

We do not look to Wyant for powerful and dramatic representation. We do not look to him for new discoveries in design or color. He had not the austere solidity of his prototype Rousseau, but he breathed into his forms a more subtle, serene and illusive spirit which we can best hint at by the word charm. Though not original in the

sense of an innovator, Wyant was, nevertheless, very personal and individual. His art was not found in formulas, and school precepts; not created to satisfy a popular fad or fancy, but created out of sheer necessity for creation. This is the divine spark of genius. It was latent in the soul of Wyant.

NOTES UPON RECENT ADDITIONS OF IMPORTANCE TO AMERICAN COLLECTIONS

THE LITTLE MADONNA BY RAPHAEL · BY FRANK JEWETT MATHER, JR.

M R. WIDENER has recently added to his collection one of the most delightful early Madonnas of Raphael. It is variously called the Cowper Madonna, from the first English owner, Lord Cowper, British Ambassador to Florence about 1780; the Panshanger Madonna, from the Cowper estate in Hertfordshire; or, as we shall prefer to call it, the Little Madonna.* It is about one half the scale of life. Passavant believes it came from Urbino, which is likely enough, for it was painted at the time when Raphael still depended largely on his Umbrian patrons. Gruyer says that it came down in one of the Bonaventura families of Urbino. It is the most graceful and generally pleasing of all Raphael's early Madonnas, though the Granduca surpasses it in majestic sweetness and the Tempi in poignancy. Its relations with these Madonnas are so close that all critics unite in dating it about 1505, the moment of Raphael's complete emancipation from the mannerisms of Perugino. These persist in a measure in the sky veiled by filmy clouds in the upper blue and graduated to pale salmon-yellow at the horizon. Perugino would also have approved the blue pool at the left, mirroring bushes, which mediates between the pale blue of the sky and the heavier blue of the mantle. But Perugino would hardly have admitted the actual presence of Cronaca's new church at S. Miniato, or the solid masses of nearby foliage. The picture is in oils, very well preserved, but still keeps the freshness and simplicity of the old tempera technique. The tenuous veils worked through the Virgin's golden hair are themselves threaded with gold. Her dress is a rather dull pink; the mantle, which merely covers the lap, is a deep

* See Frontispiece.

lapis blue, the lining showing a rich moss green where it turns into view at right and left. Originally the stretch of landscape, now quite brown, which shows above a low screen or hurdle, must have repeated the green note of the robe.

The ease of the child balancing with the mother's aid and feeling for her neck is beyond praise. The Virgin, though still akin in posture to many Peruginos, has a fuller, more natural, less affected beauty. Only the extravagantly delicate hands, quite unlike the capable hands which Raphael gave to the Granduca, have led certain critics to suspect a scholar's aid.

The composition plainly belongs to the group comprising the Granduca, Tempi, and Orleans Madonnas. In all four, the Child is supported at the right, by the left hand, and in all cases his hands or arms search for the Mother's neck. Most critics, following Gruyer, Passavant, and Crowe and Cavalcaselle, make the Cowper Madonna a link between the Granduca and the Tempi. I am inclined to agree with Rosenberg that it is the earliest of the group. Its arrangement, with the heads balancing to right and left, is still merely a refinement on the familiar pattern of Perugino; the halos, unlike those in the other pictures of the group, are set flat and unforeshortened. What we seem to have is a parallel development of two motives, a seated and a standing Madonna, the first of the two series being respectively the Cowper Madonna and the Granduca. The similarity of the types and attitudes shows that all these delightful Florentine Madonnas of Raphael must have been painted within a few months, presumably in the year 1505. Gruyer detects the influence of Leonardo in the picture, but I fancy this was not direct but mediated, through Fra Bartolommeo, whose *Bambini* are strikingly like the present one.

The Little Madonna is the fourth Raphael which has found a home in America. The first to come over was the early predella fragment, a Pietà at Fenway Court; the later superb Inghirami portrait, representing Raphael's maturest style, was added to the same collection. Next followed Mr. Morgan's Madonna of St. Anthony, still quite Perugesque, though probably finished only a few months before the Little Madonna was begun. The Little Madonna is not one of the great Raphaels, but as the only piece in America that represents the candor and amenity of the master at the moment when his originality began to assert itself, it has a peculiar interest and

value. Gruyer with his usual felicity writes of this charming piece: "La petite Madone de Lord Cowper n'a rien de solennel; mais aimable et bonne, elle exerce une puissance d'attraction singulière, et, malgré les imperfections qu'elle ne saurait cacher, elle vit à jamais dans la mémoire de ceux qui l'ont une seule fois regardée."

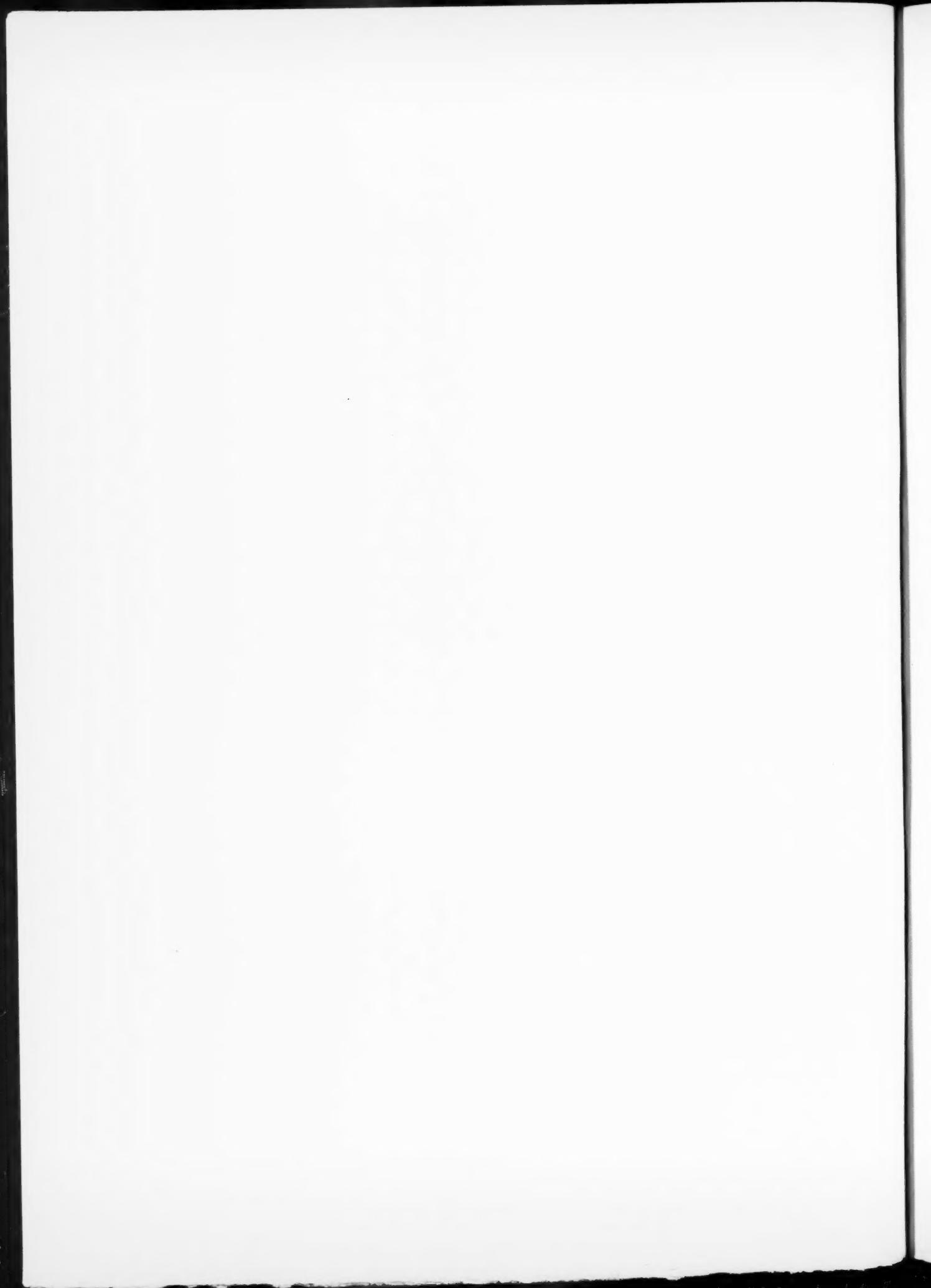
A CRUCIFIXION BY FRANCESCO DEL COSSA : BY JOSEPH BRECK

IF one did not recall how little choice in the matter of subject was left as a rule to the Renaissance artist one might be inclined to wonder at the comparative infrequency with which Francesco del Cossa depicted in those works which have survived to us the dramatic themes of Christian iconography. The blunt-featured men and women who dwell in the flinty world of his imagining, their draperies crumpled in thin metallic folds, their iron bodies shaped from within by hammering passions, were eminently suited to assume the more vehement roles of tragedy. One can easily imagine them ululating around the dead body of Christ, suffering martyrdoms, bearing painfully the burden of the world's woe. Only once, however, did Cossa paint the most poignant of all Christian subjects, the Crucifixion of Our Lord. This is the *tondo*, hitherto unpublished, which has recently been acquired by Mr. Philip Lehman of New York, through whose courtesy it is here reproduced. In the same collection, it may be remarked, are two splendid portraits, attributed to Cossa, which were formerly in the possession of Conte Gozzadini of Bologna. The *tondo* was at one time in the well-known Costabili Collection at Ferrara.

The painting is on a circular panel measuring $25\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter. The figures are silhouetted against a gold background. Pendant from the sombre Cross which rises menacingly above the parapet of Golgotha is the pallid body of Christ. At the left of the Cross stands the Madonna, majestic in her grief. With both hands she draws about her the folds of her dark brownish-red mantle. Her face, framed in a white wimple, is bent downward and her coarse features convulsed with anguish. At the right stands the Apostle St. John, his right arm extended tensely at his side as he gazes upward in a frenzy of emotion. His crimson mantle, lined with scarlet, has



FRANCESCO DEL COSSA: CRUCIFIXION.
Collection of Mr. Philip Lehman, New York.



fallen away from his right shoulder revealing his dark-blue tunic. The figures are seen somewhat from below. As a result of this low point-of-sight they seem to tower above one, adding much to the impressiveness of the picture. This monumental effect is further increased by the simplicity and openness of the design. It is evident that Cossa had profited from the lessons of Piero dei Franceschi, whose frescoes at Ferrara were so great an inspiration to this master, who derives, on the other hand, from the Paduan School through the influence of his somewhat older contemporary, Cosimo Tura.

We first hear of Cossa in 1456, when he contracts through his father, since he was not yet of age, to paint a Pietà now lost. Between 1467 and 1470 he painted his share of the frescoes in the little summer palace of Schifanoia at Ferrara. In 1470, disgruntled at the treatment accorded him by Duke Borso, he left Ferrara and took up his abode in Bologna, where he soon found abundant employment. He died in 1480 or thereabouts. Two of the principal works of this period are the Annunciation, about 1471, now in the Dresden Museum, and the Madonna and Child with Saints Petronius and John Evangelist and the donor Alberto de' Catanei, painted in 1474 and now in the Gallery at Bologna. It is with these austere and uncompromisingly grim paintings that Mr. Lehman's *tondo* shows perhaps the greatest affinity in style. The forms, the color scheme, the execution, the powerful conception of the subject are thoroughly characteristic of Francesco del Cossa, and Mr. Lehman may be congratulated upon having added to a collection, already notable, another superb masterpiece by one of the great painters of the Italian Renaissance.

A MADONNA BY GIOVANNI BELLINI · BY WILLIAM RANKIN

THE strictly medievalist tone of Crivelli and the early Bartolomeo Vivarini, both superbly illustrated in American collections, (with glimpses at the inscrutable Antonello,) hardly satisfy our need for some central representation of the vast step taken by painting in Venice between the death of Jacopo Bellini and the first works of Giorgione. No other man so fills this gap as does Giovanni Bellini; but while two of the Madonnas of his youthful years

at Padua, those in the possession of Mr. Theodore M. Davis and Mr. John G. Johnson, respectively, are highly characteristic and important, we can hardly say as much for the rather cold and conventional example in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which seems a by-product, although painted in the master's mid career. The Madonna in Mr. D. F. Platt's possession, even if by Giovanni, which I doubt, seems of little significance. With any others in America, I have no acquaintance.

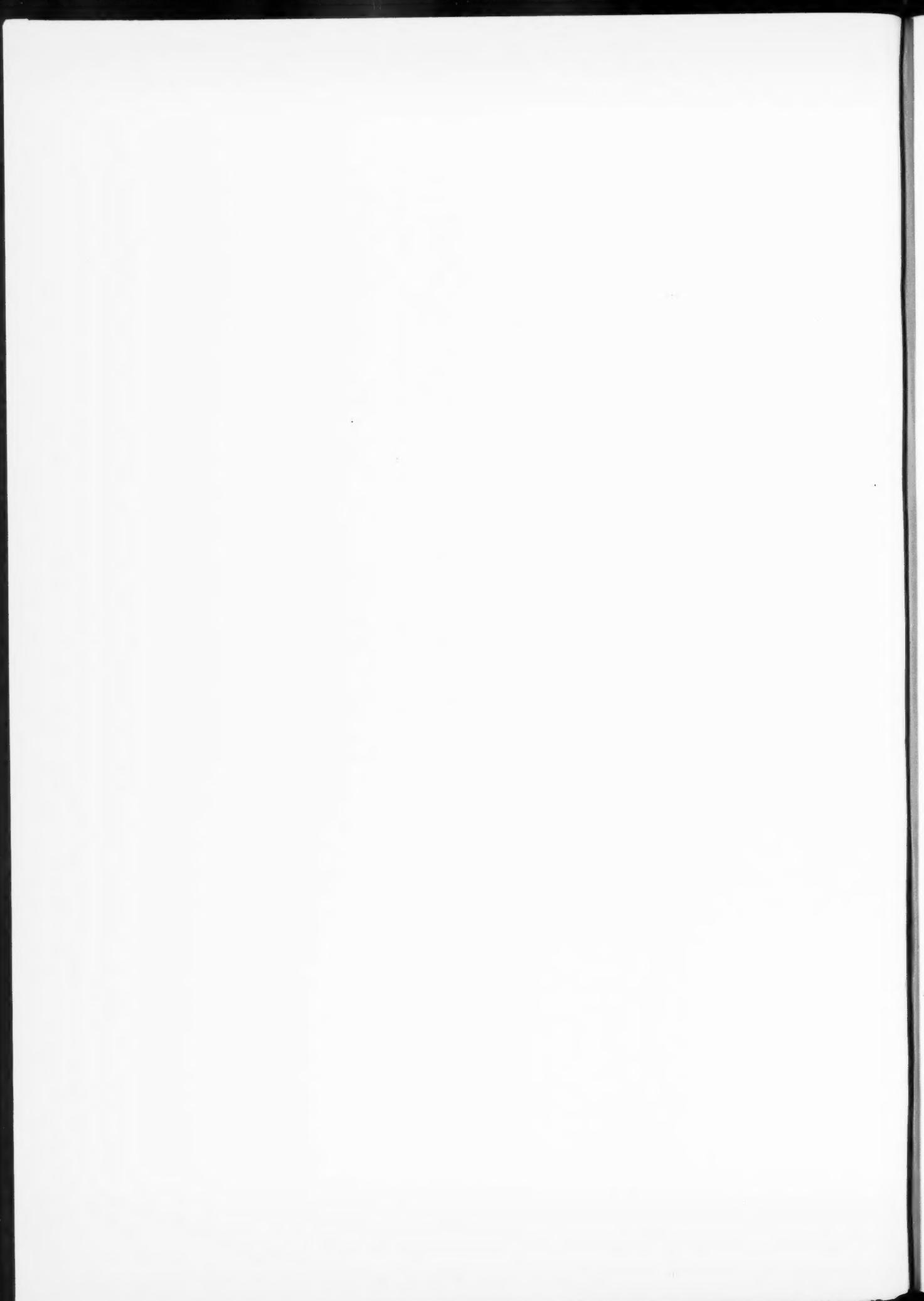
The Madonna in the possession of Mr. Grenville L. Winthrop of New York seems to me a very valuable example of Bellini's style, probably just before the complete maturing of his powers, as shown in the great altar-piece at Pesaro to which a date of about 1481 has been reasonably given.¹ I cannot trace the iconographical history of the motive, which is rather that of the Virgin adoring the Child than of the Madonna monumentally or hieratically conceived. The motive, indeed, comes from the Medieval Nativity as simplified to a compact quarter-profile group, and modified under the influence of Donatellesque relief sculpture, and with the Squarcionesque accessories of curtain and parapet—themselves of far earlier origin. It is very unusual with Bellini, and recalls the Vivarini compositions of the Virgin worshipping the sleeping infant reclining on her lap or on a parapet of which Alvise's very beautiful and popular Redentore Madonna—of a later date—is the *œuvre type*; but the naturalistic pose and action of both Virgin and Child in Mr. Winthrop's example, and the entire change from a static to a potentially kinetic and centrifugal linear scheme, lead the way to the more open, free, and descriptive action soon to be seen in the Bellinesque and early Cinquecento horizontal *Converzatione*. The half-length Virgin, a weighty type, older than the purposely Byzantine Virgin in the Brera, (which Roger Fry surely puts too early,) yet with much the same features, stands three-quarters to left, bowing in rapt love and sweet thought over the seemingly just-awakened child, with head to the right gazing out upon the world, who lies relaxed upon a parapet, and supported by two pillows. Behind is the characteristic green curtain, cutting off the landscape, except for little vistas on either side.

The feeling is of serene and intimate domesticity, quite exceptionally tender and expressive, with a severity of pattern, of planes,

¹ Roger Fry, *Giovanni Bellini*, London, 1901, p. 30.



GIOVANNI BELLINI: A MADONNA.
Collection of Mr. Grenville L. Winthrop.



of big broad massy drapery, to dignify the votive thought. One hardly knows which other work of the period it most recalls in sentiment. For the actual motive we may compare the disputed and less important Virgin with the Sleeping Child in the Verona Museo Civico (No. 110), and Mr. Davis's Madonna, which has been called the earliest of the Madonnas; but for feeling with a quite other conception in form, I call to mind pictures like the repainted Madonna with a Greek inscription in S. Maria del Orto, probably of a few years earlier, and the wistful, half ascetic matronly Virgin with the upright Child Blessing, in a landscape, of the Venice Academy.

That our picture is at least some years earlier than the famous so-called "scornful" Madonna signed and dated 1487 in the Venice Academy seems clear enough from the color, if I may trust long memories. The lower part of the picture, better preserved than the rest, goes back to an early enthusiasm for melting vinous contours and delicate fastidious modelling in the flesh, as in the delicious play of light and warmth about the boy's toes on the cooler stone or the purpling shadow on the chin. One never forgets those earlier essays in Giovanni's color which present objects in light and air, as against the exotic magnificence of the Byzantine Oriental modes, and we observe here, with less eager passion but with greater freedom, much the same color-tone as in the very early and timid Pietà with the forged monogram of Dürer or the mystic Blood of the Redeemer. Not, of course that the picture is to be ranked with such inspirations. If we go on to the varying rare blues, the metallic sheen of the Virgin's sleeve across the deeper toned bodice, tied with old gold; or the simpler surfaces and textures in the ensemble, the curtain and stuffs, the plain parapet and quiet vista, intoned to muted chords of hour and season in the vaporous light of the lagoons, we shall find Giorgione, Titian, Veronese in the making. The breadth, reticence, refinement of a supreme early Titian like the "Sclavonian Lady" which we have seen recently in New York depends directly on painting of this type.

To the Editor of ART IN AMERICA.

Sir: In my opinion Mr. Breck's attribution of the double portrait in the Metropolitan Museum to the early period of Fra Filippo Lippi is most convincing. What Mr. Mather says against it does not seem to me to be supported by any valid evidence. If he had seen the female portrait by Fra Filippo in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Mr. Mather could not have doubted the double portrait as a work by this artist, for he could not deny that both are by the same hand. The Berlin picture shows beyond question not only in design and modeling but especially in the color and the architectural background typical characteristics which we find only in Fra Filippo's works. I regret that I did not see the double portrait the last time that I was in New York, 1911. Otherwise I would have mentioned it in my article on the Berlin picture. It seems to me still several years earlier than the portrait in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum as it is stiffer and less successful in the fore-shortening. Mr. Breck's supposition that it was painted in 1436 or not much later is very possible on account of the picture's similarity in style to the early Adoration pictures of the artist. It is surely not right to assume from the somewhat protruding abdomen of the woman that she was pregnant and that the picture was therefore painted as late as 1444. The artist has only reproduced the effect of the costume of the period and the way in which women held themselves at that time. To mention one example out of many, I refer to the female portrait by Domenico Veneziano in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum. The name of Domenico Veneziano which Mr. Mather proposed for the Marquand picture is quite out of the question. This is proved by comparison with the two pictures in the Berlin Museum by this artist which are much more advanced and show absolutely different treatment of the background. Still less probable is Paolo Uccello as an examination of his coarse and more primitive portraits in the Louvre would demonstrate.

I hope that the attribution of these portraits in Berlin and New York to Fra Filippo will soon be generally accepted as we would advance considerably through this in the knowledge of this artist and the earliest portrait art in Florence. I am,

Most sincerely yours,

WILHELM BODE.

Berlin, April 10, 1914.

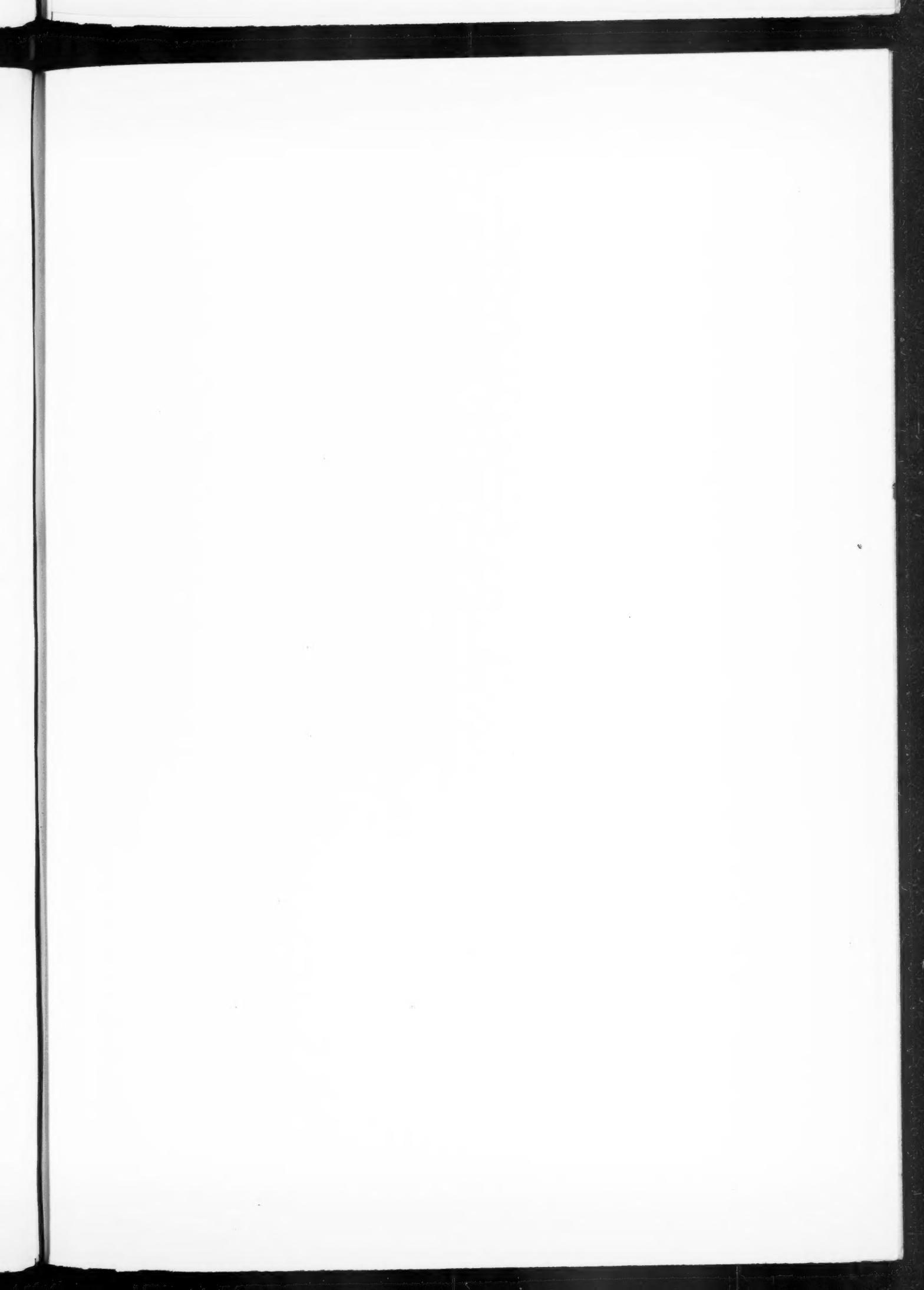




Fig. 1. NARDO DI CIONE: MADONNA ENTHRONED.
Historical Society, New York.